

Presentation

3 mL liquid, contained in a glass bottle (comes with a green plastic inhaler)

Pharmacology

Methoxyflurane is an ethyl-methyl ether. When inhaled at low concentrations, the vapour provides analgesia. Onset is within 3 minutes. The inhaler should last 20 to 30 minutes with 3 mL methoxyflurane. Analgesia wears off 5 to 10 minutes after stopping inhalation.

Indication

Moderate to severe pain

Contraindications

- decreased level of consciousness
- behaviourally disturbed patients
- known allergy or previous adverse reaction
- malignant hyperthermia (a very rare, life threatening reaction to volatile anaesthetics)
- renal failure or severe renal disease (but not including patients on dialysis)
- age < 1 year

Adverse Effects

- decreased level of consciousness
- confusion / behavioural disturbance
- renal damage in high doses

Dose

Slowly pour **3 mL** methoxyflurane into the inhaler. Ask the patient to breathe deeply and slowly in and out through the inhaler. The patient may place a finger over the hole to increase the vapour concentration, if required. Once analgesia has been obtained, inhalation can be intermittent.

May be repeated once if needed (after 20 – 30 minutes, when the inhaler is exhausted)

Maximum dose – 6 mL per day, and 15 mL per week

Notes

- do not put more than 3 mL methoxyflurane into the inhaler at one time – otherwise there is a risk of inhaling droplets
- do not connect oxygen directly to the inhaler (these are now manufactured without an oxygen nipple)
- only 3 mL methoxyflurane can be administered at any one time in the back of an ambulance
- at no time is unconsciousness or sedation to be deliberately induced with methoxyflurane
- at no time is a patient self-administering methoxyflurane to be left unattended
- it is only appropriate to use methoxyflurane in a situation where the patient will be transported to hospital by ambulance

Methoxyflurane is an accountable drug, and details of administration must be recorded in a Register of Restricted Medication, in accordance with St John (NSW) policy.