

## **Hissey Kientz, LLP warns Duragesic patch users about potential health risks of fentanyl overdose**

The law firm of [Hissey Kientz, LLP](#) is urging the manufacturers of the fentanyl or Duragesic pain patches to address recurring problems with their products that could lead to a potentially fatal overdose. Fentanyl or Duragesic patches have been recalled on at least six occasions since 2004 because of manufacturing defects.

On August 7, 2009, Watson Pharmaceuticals recalled Lot Number 145287A of its 100 mcg/hr fentanyl patches. The [recalled patches](#) were shipped between April 2 and May 20, 2009 and expire in February 2011.

Watson's patches use the "reservoir design" in which a reservoir of fentanyl gel is used to deliver pain medication. The patches were recalled because a number of patches have been leaking fentanyl gel.

"This isn't the first time reservoir design patches have been recalled due to leakage. How many more recalls must there be before manufacturers abandon this dangerous design?" asked Kathleen McGinn, an attorney with Hissey Kientz.

The [Duragesic pain patch](#)—marketed generically as fentanyl—was approved by the Food and Drug Administration in 1990 for the treatment of chronic pain. Because the patch is approximately 80 times more powerful than morphine, Duragesic and fentanyl are only prescribed to patients who have developed a high tolerance to pain medications.

Because of its high potency, patients who receive too much of the medication in the pain patch are at an increased risk of a [fentanyl overdose](#). Direct exposure to fentanyl gel can cause too much medication to enter the patient's bloodstream, which may be fatal. The use of heating blankets can also cause the patch to release medication too quickly, increasing the risk of an overdose.

In May 2009, rock musician Jay Bennett—formerly of the group Wilco—was found dead of what a coroner's examination later ruled was an overdose caused by the fentanyl patch. The FDA issued a warning about the dangers of the Duragesic and fentanyl patches in July 2005 after it received reports of at least 120 deaths related to their use.

Dozens of [lawsuits](#) have been filed against the manufacturers of the Duragesic or fentanyl patches. Many allege that an individual was killed by a defective pain patch. The manufacturers of fentanyl patches have lost all four cases that have gone to trial. The largest verdict to date was \$16.5 million dollars to the family of a Chicago woman who died while wearing a reservoir-style fentanyl patch.

"We are very interested in speaking to anyone who believes a loved one died because of any fentanyl patch, even if the patch wasn't in a recalled lot," said McGinn.

Lawsuits are currently pending across the country against every major manufacturer of fentanyl patches, including Watson. No Watson lawsuit has yet gone to trial as of the present date.

#### About Hissey Kientz, LLP

Hissey Kientz, LLP is currently accepting cases involving individuals who may have been injured as a result of a fentanyl or Duragesic overdose. Hissey Kientz, LLP also represents those who contracted mesothelioma or lung cancer as a result of asbestos exposure, and those injured by Fleet Phospho-soda, Digitek, Zicam, the Composix Kugel mesh patch, gadolinium MRI contrast dyes or other defective drugs and devices. To learn more about the firm and other drug cases, visit Hissey Kientz, LLP ([www.hkllp.com](http://www.hkllp.com)) or call toll-free at (866) 275-4454.