

For wounded Marines, a 'lollipop' to ease pain

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US Marines badly wounded in Afghanistan may get a "lollipop" with a powerful pain killer from now on instead of the traditional shot of morphine, a Marine Corps spokesman said Tuesday.

The new treatment offers an alternative to the [morphine](#) needle "you see in the [World War II](#) movies," with medics jabbing a syrette into a soldier's leg or arm, Captain Brian Block said.

The Fentanyl lollipop offers medics a faster way to ease the pain of a battlefield injury as the drug can be absorbed more rapidly through a lozenge in the mouth than from a needle injected into a muscle, Block said.

"The [absorption](#) is actually faster through the [blood vessels](#) in the mouth. You don't have to worry about shock which will constrict the blood vessels in a major muscle in a leg or an arm," Block told AFP.

After US Marine special operations forces used the new sucker successfully, commanders ordered the lollipop to be distributed to medics throughout the [Marine Corps](#), he said.

The marines started delivering the lollipop to medical corpsmen about two months ago, he said.

"Some medics have it now. And it will continue to be fielded until it's out there for everybody," he said.

The lollipop also gives medics more control over the dosage, as the lozenge can be withdrawn at any moment, unlike a shot of morphine, he said.

"If the patient goes into shock or if there's a reason that you need to limit the dosage that you're giving to them, you can just pop it out of the mouth in a way that you couldn't (with the syrette).

"Once the morphine's in, the morphine's in."

Like other medicine distributed to military medics, the lollipops are subject to strict controls and will not be handed out directly to troops on the [battlefield](#), he said.

"We'll take the appropriate steps to maintain accountability and maintain that they're being used appropriately," he said.

Medics in Afghanistan will still have the option of employing the morphine syrette, a small needle on a collapsible tube.

And for the moment, the pain-killing sucker will come in only one flavor -- "berry," he said.

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