

Patient Education Sheet

What You Need to Know About Your Fentanyl Patch

What is a Fentanyl patch?

Fentanyl is a narcotic, which is a strong pain medication. The patch contains the medicine. When the patch is placed on the skin, your body slowly begins to absorb the fentanyl.

How is the patch used?

The patch is put directly on the skin.

1. Do not put the fentanyl patch on skin that is very oily, burned, broken out, or irritated in any way. Avoid sensitive areas. If there is hair, **do not shave** the hair off. Instead, clip the hair as close to the skin as possible.
2. For adults: Put the patch on the chest, back, sides of the waist, or upper arm in a place where there is no hair.
3. For children (and adults with mental impairment): Put the patch on the upper back. This will lower the chances that the child will remove the patch and put it in their mouth.
4. Talk to your healthcare professional if you have questions about where to place the patch.

Before putting the patch on, be sure to clean the skin area with water only – do not use soap. Pat the skin completely dry. Do not use lotions, oils, or alcohol on the area before the patch is put on.

Each patch has a clear plastic backing. Carefully peel this backing off trying to touch the sticky side of the patch **as little as possible**.

Press the patch onto the chosen skin site with the palm of your hand and hold it there for at

least 30 seconds. Contact your healthcare professional if you have problems with the patch sticking.

Wash your hands after applying a fentanyl patch.

You can bathe, swim, or shower while you are wearing a fentanyl patch.

Remove the patch after wearing it for 3 days (72 hours). Choose a different place on the skin to apply a new patch. Be sure to use the patch as directed by your healthcare professional.

While using the Fentanyl Patch:

- **DO NOT** wear more than one patch at the same time unless directed to so by your healthcare professional.
- **DO NOT** change your dose unless directed by your healthcare professional.
- **DO NOT** sunbathe, use a hot tub, saunas, heating pads, electric blankets, heated waterbeds, or tanning lamps. Heat changes how the medicine is absorbed through the skin.
- **DO NOT** drive or operate heavy machinery until you know how the fentanyl affects you.
- Like all prescription drugs, **DO NOT** share the patch with other people.

How do I throw away the fentanyl patch?

- Fold the used fentanyl patch in half so that the sticky side sticks to itself.
- Flush the used fentanyl patch down the toilet right away.
- The used patches should not be placed in the regular household garbage where children or pets can find them.
- **Note:** The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) believes the risk of harm from accidental contact to this strong drug outweighs the environmental risk of disposal by flushing.

Resources:

<http://www.fda.gov/ForConsumers/ConsumerUpdates>

<http://www.fda.gov/downloads/Drugs/DrugSafety/UCM088584.pdf>

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