

Patient information

Pain killer for moderate to severe pain

Pain relief patches (transdermal patches)

Name of medicine: Fentanyl patch / Buprenorphine patch

What is it for?

Fentanyl / Buprenorphine patches are used for moderate to severe pain. They are used to control on-going pain. They are not used for pain which only lasts a short time. You will be given a different, quick acting pain killer to take for breakthrough pain, if you need to. Some people need more than one patch placed to make up the total amount of pain relief required.

How do I take Fentanyl / Buprenorphine patches?

The medicine is inside the patches. They have a sticky back, which is stuck directly on to the skin. The pain killer, Fentanyl/Buprenorphine, slowly passes from the patch through the skin into the body. Each patch is used only once.

How long does a Fentanyl / Buprenorphine patch last?

Patches last for different lengths of time. Please use as directed or advised by your health care professional (HCP). Use a calendar to mark the day when you first start your patches and when you change them. Change your patch at about the same time of the day each time. You should not stop using Fentanyl / Buprenorphine patches suddenly.

How do I change my patch(es)?

- 1 Take the old patch off and fold the used patch as soon as it is removed so that the adhesive side of the patch sticks firmly to itself. Dispose of the folded patch safely in the bin with your household rubbish. Discard safely out of reach of children.
- 2 Wash your hands. Choose the patch application site carefully. The skin should not have any cuts, scars or spots and should not be too hairy. Clean the skin with water only, make sure it is cool and completely dry.
- 3 Tear open the pouch of the new patch. Peel off the plastic backing. Stick the patch on to the clean area of skin. Press it on firmly and check the adhesion of the patch once applied, especially the edges. Wash your hands. Do not stick the patch on the same place twice in a row.
- 4 Keep all patches (used and unused) out of the reach and sight of children. This medicinal product does not require any other special storage conditions.
- 5 Do not use Fentanyl / Buprenorphine patches after the expiry date which is stated on the carton and pouch. The expiry date refers to the last day of that month. If the patches are out of date, take them to your pharmacy.

What do I do if a patch falls off or I forget to change it?

Stick a new one on as soon as you can. If you are very late changing your patch, you may need to take your quick / short-acting pain killer until the Fentanyl / Buprenorphine patch starts working again.

What should I do if I still get pain while using a Fentanyl/Buprenorphine patch?

When you start a Fentanyl / Buprenorphine patch (or if the dose is increased) it takes time to work. Your HCP will give you extra pain killers to take if you need them until your patch is working completely. Some people find that doing certain things like having a bath or going for a walk brings on the pain. Your HCP may suggest you take a quick acting pain killer before you start doing something that brings on pain.

If your pain is not well controlled and you are needing to take more than 2 - 3 doses of extra pain killer a day, tell your HCP.

What do I do if the patch does not control my pain?

Although Fentanyl / Buprenorphine are very good pain killers, it is not helpful for all types of pain. You may still have pain despite using bigger doses of Fentanyl / Buprenorphine and may feel unwell in one or more of these ways:

- more sleepy than usual
- feeling sick more of the time
- restlessness or jumpiness
- bad dreams

Do not worry if this happens, but tell your HCP. Your HCP may reduce your dose of Fentanyl/Buprenorphine and suggest other treatments to help the pain.

Are there any side effects from using Fentanyl / Buprenorphine?

Constipation: Fentanyl / Buprenorphine tends to cause less constipation than some other strong pain killers but you may still need to take a regular laxative.

Sleepiness: This is uncommon but, if you become unusually sleepy or muddled, you may need the Fentanyl / Buprenorphine dose reduced. Contact your HCP.

Skin rash/irritation: If you develop itching or redness under the patch, tell your HCP.

Changing from another pain killer: A few people who change from another pain killer to Fentanyl / Buprenorphine feel unwell in the first 24 - 48 hours with sickness, shivering, stomach pains or diarrhoea. Contact your HCP if this happens.

Heat effects: The patches are waterproof so you can have a shower or bath or go swimming (avoid soaking the patch in a hot bath). Avoid too much direct heat like a hot water bottle, electric blanket, sun bathing, heat lamp or hot spa bath as this affects the way the medicine is released from the patch. If you develop a fever try to keep your temperature down and contact your HCP.

Patch falls off frequently: Sweating or applying the patch to hairy skin may prevent it sticking well. You may be given some sticky tape to keep the patch on. Discuss with your HCP.

Can I drive?

It is a driver's responsibility to decide whether they consider their driving is, or they believe might be, impaired on any given occasion.

- Do not drive if any symptoms or signs develop suggesting that your driving may be impaired, such as experiencing sleepiness, poor coordination, impaired or slowed thinking, dizziness or visual disturbances.
- Do not drive at certain times when the risk may be temporarily increased, eg when first starting, or when first increasing or reducing the dose of, a medicine that may potentially impair your driving. This applies for five days after any change to your medication.
- Take particular care in circumstances that may increase the risk of your driving being impaired whilst taking your medicine and to avoid driving if this occurs. Such situations could include:
 - * if another prescribed medicine or over the counter medicine is added that could also impair your driving alongside the already potentially impairing medicine(s).
 - * if there is a developing medical condition that could increase the risk of the impairing side-effects from the prescribed medicine.
- Be aware that alcohol taken in combination with other impairing drugs can substantially increase the risk of accidents.
- It is helpful to carry evidence of your prescription with you whilst driving.

Can I drink alcohol?

A small glass of wine, beer or a sherry may help you feel better and improve your appetite. It is best to avoid taking more than this as you may become drowsy.

Safety

- If a patch is transferred to another person, remove it immediately and seek medical advice.
- If a patch is swallowed seek medical help immediately.

If you have any questions or require advice, please telephone the Palliative Care Team on 01284 713776 available Monday to Saturday 9:00am to 4.00 pm or email palliativecare@wsh.nhs.uk

If you have been discharged from hospital please contact your GP, or if out of hours, telephone 111.

West Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust is actively involved in clinical research. Your doctor, clinical team or the research and development department may contact you regarding specific clinical research studies that you might be interested in participating in. If you do not wish to be contacted for these purposes, please email info.gov@wsh.nhs.uk. This will in no way affect the care or treatment you receive.

If you would like any information regarding access to the West Suffolk Hospital and its facilities please visit the website for AccessAble (formerly DisabledGo)
<https://www.accessable.co.uk>



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