

## PHARMACY

### Drug Information

# Fentanyl Patch

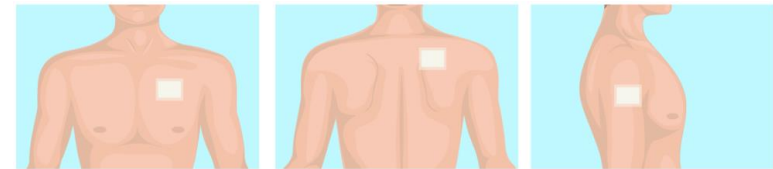


### What is Fentanyl Patch?

- Fentanyl is a strong opioid. It is used to relieve moderate to severe pain and/or breathlessness. The medication is contained within a thin, adhesive patch which is applied onto the skin and is usually changed every three days.
- Although it provides round-the-clock relief, pain or breathlessness may be experienced intermittently (termed as breakthrough pain / breathlessness), especially when fentanyl patch is first started as it may take few hours for the effect to set in. You may be prescribed additional short-acting painkillers to cope with this.

### Where can I Apply Fentanyl Patch?

- Fentanyl patch is commonly applied to dry, non-hairy areas such as the chest, back and upper arms. If the area has body hair, clip, instead of shave, the hair close to the skin with scissors.  
\*Reminder: Do not apply to broken skin or on areas of skin that have received recent radiotherapy.

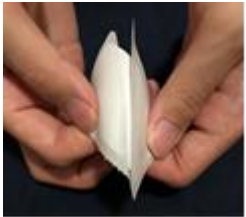


- Use clean and cool water to clean the area where the patch is to be applied. Do not use soap, alcohol or other creams/lotions as these may increase the effect of the medication. Make sure the skin is completely dry before applying the patch.
- If you require more than one patch as directed by a healthcare professional, apply the patches in close proximity to each other. Ensure that the patches do not overlap.

## How do I Apply Fentanyl Patch?



1. Open the pouch by tearing along the pre-cut notch (avoid using scissors as it may damage the patch).



2. With the backing facing up, hold the edges of the patch with your thumb and index finger and bend the patch along the S-shaped/diagonal cut to expose the adhesive surface.



3. While avoiding touching the adhesive, peel one side of the backing from the patch.



4. Place the exposed adhesive surface onto the skin at the application site. Remove the other side of the backing and press the entire patch onto the skin firmly with the palm of your hand for about 30 seconds. An additional protective dressing may be applied over the patch to prevent it from falling off.  
*\*Reminder:* when changing the patch, remove the old one before applying a new one.

5. Write the date and time of application on a sticky label and stick it on the patch.
6. After putting the patch on for three days (or as directed by healthcare professionals), remove it and apply a new patch on a different site. You may apply on the same area after 5-7 days.
7. Fold used patches into half with sticky sides together and dispose them securely such that no one else can have access (intentional or otherwise) to the used patches.

8. Wash your hands every time after you have finished applying / removing / disposing the patch.

## Important Advice on Safe Usage of Fentanyl Patch

- Do not expose the patch area to heat sources (e.g. heating pads, hot baths or sauna) as heat can increase the absorption of the drug through the skin.
- If the patch falls off, dispose it properly (see point 7 above) and apply a new one to another area of the skin.
- Never share your fentanyl patch with others. Fentanyl is a strong pain-killer that must be used only under close medical supervision.
- Avoid accidental contact between the patch and other people, especially children. If the patch accidentally sticks to another person's skin, take the patch off immediately, wash the area with water and see a doctor.

## Can Fentanyl Patch be Administered / Taken With Other Medications?

- Please inform your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking other medications, including supplements, traditional or herbal remedies.

## What are the Important Side Effects of Fentanyl Patch?

- Like all other medicines, fentanyl patch has side effects. Some of these side effects may get better over time while others last longer. You can also speak to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist on ways to manage these side effects. Below are commonly reported side effects.

Side Effect	Management
Constipation	Constipation will persist as long as this medication is used. You may be prescribed laxatives to prevent / relieve constipation.
Drowsiness	Do not drive or operate dangerous machinery. Drowsiness can be transient and may last for a few days. If you experience persistent or excessive drowsiness, please inform your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.
Nausea, vomiting	Nausea and vomiting usually improves after a few days. If you are troubled by this side effect, your doctor may prescribe some medication for you.
Skin irritation	Local skin irritation is common. It could be prevented by rotating the site of application.

If you develop rashes, facial swelling or shortness of breath after taking the medication, you could be allergic to the medication. Please seek medical attention immediately.

## Are There any Special Precautions That I Need to Take?

- Inform the doctor, nurse or pharmacist who is looking after you that you are using fentanyl patch. As the fentanyl patch is a thin and clear patch, it may not be easily visible.

- When discharged from any healthcare institution, make sure that you are aware of when the existing patch is due for change. Check with the healthcare professionals if you are unsure.
- It is important to inform your doctor if you intend to conceive or breastfeed while taking this medication.

## How do I Store Fentanyl Patch?

- Store your medication in a cool, dry place away from heat, moisture and direct sunlight.

## How do I Dispose Unused / Expired Fentanyl Patches Properly?

- You should return any unused or expired fentanyl patches back to pharmacy and they will help you to dispose them safely. Make sure that the medications are labelled with the following:
  - Name and NRIC of the patient (if known)
  - Name and strength of the Fentanyl patch(es)
  - Reason for disposal

If you have any problem with your treatment, please contact your doctor, pharmacist or nurse clinician.

Please keep all medications out of reach of children.

