

## Potential side effects

Read the patient information leaflet with your medicine for a full list of side effects, the most common ones include:

- gut (e.g. nausea, vomiting and constipation)
- sleepiness (do not drive, or operate machinery if affected)

Drinking alcohol when using opioid patches can make you more sleepy.

## Signs and symptoms of too much medicine

Seek **immediate** medical attention if you:

- are feverish
- have trouble breathing, or shallow / very slow breathing
- have extreme sleepiness or sedation
- are unable to think / walk / talk normally
- are feeling faint, confused or more dizzy than usual

## Taking other medicines

Use a regular community pharmacy and seek their advice when buying over the counter medicines / herbal products.

## Using medical services

Bring in your medicines or a list of your current medicines if you go:

- to out-patient clinic, hospital, out-of-hours services or the dentist
- for scans, X-rays or any hospital procedures

Some opioid patches cannot be worn during an MRI scan. If needed you will be advised to remove the patch before the scan, and a new patch should be applied afterwards.

## Where I can find out more

Contact your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you have any queries or would like more information.

## Contact Us

### Specialist Palliative Care Team

Tel: (01534) 876555



**Jersey Hospice Care**

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# PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

## Opioid Patches (Fentanyl and Buprenorphine)

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## Why you have been given this leaflet

You may find this information helpful if you use an opioid patch, or you care for someone who uses opioid patches. Examples of opioid patches used in Jersey are Fentanyl or Buprenorphine.

You should also read the patient information leaflet in the medicine packaging. Use the patch exactly as directed by your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Patches are designed to provide you with better background pain relief, by delivering a small amount of pain killer through the skin throughout the day. If you still experience pain during the day, you can also take fast-acting painkillers as advised by your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

## Using and disposing of your opioid patch safely

Make sure you know how many patches to apply and how often you should apply them. When you change to your next patch, you should take the old one off and apply the new patch to a different area of skin on your body.

Remove the old patch and carefully fold it over so the sticky sides are stuck together. Put it back in its original pouch.

Make sure you safely dispose of patches out of the sight and reach of children and animals. This may be in a bin with household rubbish.

Where possible, you should use the same make of patch each time. If you notice that your patch looks different from those that you normally use, ask your pharmacist for advice.

## Where to apply the opioid patch

Make sure you know the correct place on your body to apply the patch:

- use non-hairy and dry skin
- cut any hair in the area with scissors
- do not shave the area before applying a patch (may irritate the skin)
- do not apply the patch to broken or irritated skin
- do not use the patch on skin that has undergone radiation therapy

## How to apply the opioid patch

**Never** cut the patch.

When applying the new patch avoid touching sticky sides. Press the patch firmly in place for 30 to 60 seconds. Wash your hands afterwards.

It may be helpful to use a calendar to record the day you put the patch on.

The patch will not start or stop working straight away. You may need to take fast-acting painkillers when starting the patch, as advised by your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

If a patch falls off, start another patch. Do not re-use the same patch.

If the edge of the patch starts to peel, use suitable skin-friendly tape (e.g. white surgical tape) to secure the patch.

## Keeping yourself and others safe

Keep the opioid patches out of sight and reach of children and animals.

Deaths have occurred where children have:

- removed patches from adults they have been sleeping alongside
- swallowed discarded or 'fallen-off' patches

It is recommended to wear an item of clothing over the patch when sharing a bed with children or a partner.

Opioid patches are not plasters, **never** put them on cuts or injuries. To reduce risk, store opioid patches and first aid kits in separate locations.

Seek **immediate** medical attention if an opioid patch is:

- swallowed by yourself or others
- applied to the skin of anyone other than yourself

The body can absorb too much medicine if the patch gets too hot. Avoid placing heat sources against / near the patch (e.g. hot water bottles, heat pads or heat blankets). Avoid hot tubs and saunas. Do not take long hot baths. Keep the patch area out of excessive sun. Store patches away from heat sources.