The ROYAL MARSDEN
NHS Foundation Trust

Patient information

Fentanyl patch for pain relief

What is fentanyl?

Fentanyl is an opioid (strong) painkiller.

Why is my child being prescribed a fentanyl patch?

A fentanyl patch is prescribed when a person needs regular, long-term pain relief medicine. The patch is stuck to the skin and slowly releases Fentanyl through the skin giving background pain relief. The patch is changed every 3 days (72 hours, or as prescribed

How does it work?

The patch releases medicine over 72 hours when resting, moving around or sleeping. Sometimes pain can breakthrough even with the patch. The quick-acting medicines e.g., morphine (liquid or tablet) or oxycodone (liquid or capsule) are given as they work fast when pain increases. Your child's specialist team will explain how and when to give these extra doses.

Fentanyl patch on skin

Safety advice for using fentanyl patches

When the Fentanyl patch is first put on it can take up to 12 hours to start working. Please make sure that your child continues taking their quick acting morphine or oxycodone for pain, as needed. Changes in dose will also take up to 12 hours before they start working.

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Radiotherapy and Chemotherapy Services F538021 & F538022

If you child is hot (fever) to the touch their body may use more fentanyl, and the patch may need to be changed more often. Heat can increase the amount of fentanyl absorbed, so take care not to expose the patch to warm radiators, hairdryer, hot water bottle and hot baths. If your child is sweaty, you may need to apply an extra clear dressing over the patch to keep it in place.

Change the patch at a similar time on day 3. Use a new area each time e.g. arm, back, thigh. Check daily that the patch is still stuck to the skin.

Remove the patch gently before putting a new one and wash hands after use.

Please read the patient leaflet that comes with the Fentanyl patches on how to apply the patch to the skin).

A patient safety alert was issued in October 2018 by the MHRA to advise health care professionals to no longer cut fentanyl patches. However, your child may require a smaller dose than can be given by a whole patch. Our paediatric pharmacist and consultant guide the team to be able to advise cutting the patch.

Safe disposal of a fentanyl patch

Any used or unused cut patches should be folded so that the sticky side sticks to itself. It is then wrapped in tissue and thrown away. This must then be disposed of; ideally in a sharps bin. This is to reduce the risk of swallowing an unused patch.

Watch for side effects

Seek medical advice if your child has:

Drowsiness or sleepiness (mainly for the first 24 hours after starting or increasing the dose).

· Nausea and/or vomiting

· Problems in passing urine

· Delusions

· Sweating

Constipation

· Headache

· Skin rash (localised)

Itching

If your child is more drowsy and/or is breathing more slowly or weakly than normal, contact The Royal Marsden paediatric 24-hour advice line OR the symptom care team urgently for advice.

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Contact details

If you have any questions about the enclosed, please contact:

The Royal Marsden Paediatric 24-hour advice line: 020 8915 6248

OR

The Children and young person's symptom care specialist Team, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm: 020 8661 3625

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