

## Buprenorphine patch for pain relief

### What is Buprenorphine?

Buprenorphine is an opioid (for moderate to strong) pain relief.

### Why is my child being prescribed a Buprenorphine patch?

A Buprenorphine patch is prescribed when a child or young person needs regular, moderately strong pain relief medicine to keep their pain under control. The patch aims to continuously release Buprenorphine to give a constant supply of background pain relief medicine. Buprenorphine patches work alongside the immediate release (quick acting) pain relief medicines (e.g. Oramorph) already prescribed which should be given when your child's pain breaks through.

### Topical Buprenorphine patch

A Buprenorphine patch will be prescribed for pain relief when:

- Your child's pain is under control and regular opioid pain relievers are being taken
- Your child is struggling to take oral medication and needs an opioid to control their pain



### How does a Buprenorphine patch work?

Buprenorphine works by blocking pain signals between the site of your child's pain and their brain. The patch slowly releases Buprenorphine through the skin and into the bloodstream so that there is a continuous release of painkiller giving your child constant background pain relief.

### How is Buprenorphine patch used?

- The Buprenorphine patch is a small, thin patch that is applied with the adhesive side stuck onto a flat, hairless non-irritated part of your child's skin. This may be on the top of the arm, back of their shoulder or chest as it is more effective on the upper extremities.



- The patch is usually changed at a similar time every seven days (once a week).
- There are a range of Buprenorphine patches of varying strengths which will be prescribed depending on your child's pain experience. The symptom care nurse will advise you.
- Occasionally you may be advised by a specialist nurse or doctor to cut a Buprenorphine patch so that the appropriate dose can be given to your child for their pain. This is because the strength of a whole patch may cause unwanted side effects.

### **What special precautions should I follow?**

- **The first time** you apply the patch; it can take up to a day or two for the Buprenorphine patch to start working. Please make sure that your child continues to take their immediate release pain relief medicines (e.g. Oramorph) as needed during this time.
- Pain relief should not be re-assessed until the patch has been in place for at least 72 hours (3 days) to allow for gradual increase in buprenorphine concentration in the blood stream).
- Patch strengths can be combined and a maximum of 2 patches can be used at any one time.
- If your child has an increased temperature (fever) their body may use more Buprenorphine, and the patch may need to be changed more often. This must be discussed with a health care professional. If your child is sweaty, you may need to apply an additional clear dressing over the patch to keep it in place.
- Take care not to expose the patch to direct heat, such as radiators, hair dryers, hot water bottles and hot baths, as this can cause a rapid amount of Buprenorphine to be released into your child's blood stream.
- Please ensure you change the site that you stick the patch to each time the patch is changed, for example, a different part of the arm. Avoid the same site for 3 weeks.
- Do not apply the patch on fragile skin and make sure to remove gently. If difficult to remove speak to your health care team for further advise.
- If your child has any difficulties in having the patch changed, please speak to your health care team for further advise.

### **What side effects might my child experience when using a buprenorphine patch?**

Buprenorphine is a morphine -like medicine and the side effects are like Morphine side effects.

- Drowsiness or sleepiness (especially for the first 24 hours after changing the dose)
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Hallucinations
- Sweating
- Constipation
- Skin rash (localized)
- Skin irritation can be experienced with 7day use. A steroid inhaler sprayed onto the site may reduce the risk of skin irritation

If you notice that your child is experiencing an unusual level of drowsiness and/or breathing more slowly or weakly than normal, and you feel it is not related to their illness, remove the patch and contact your health care team **urgently** for further advice.

Buprenorphine will continue to be available in the blood stream for up to 24 hours and your child will need to be observed.





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### **Contact details**

If you have any questions about this information, please contact:

The Children and young person's oncology Outreach and Symptom Care Nurse Specialists (CYPOONS) Team, Monday to Friday RMH **0208661 3625 OR**

Shooting Star Chase Hospice (SPACE) team, Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm **01483 230980**

**PATCH Out- of- Hours Tel: 020 8642 6011**

(<https://butrans.com/patient/resources.html>)

