

Application of Medicated Skin Patches

Skin patches are thin pads with an adhesive back that are applied to the skin rather like a plaster. Patches contain a reservoir or matrix of medicine that passes slowly from the patch through the skin and into the bloodstream.

Skin patches can also be used as an alternative way of getting medicines into the body, which may be useful if someone is feeling continuously sick or is unable to take medicines by mouth. Patches can also be helpful for people who find it difficult to remember to take their medicines during the day, and may be useful in managing pain.

Carers can administer patches as part of their core competency training on medicines administration.

General advice for application of medication patches.

Each skin patch product will have its own directions

- 1. Read the patient information leaflet carefully to follow specific guidance for each type of medicated patch.**
2. Discuss the site of application with the patient, to ensure the patch is applied to an area of the body which is acceptable to the patient.
3. Wash hands.
4. Carefully remove the patch from its pouch, taking care not to tear the patch. Use your fingers rather than scissors to avoid damaging the patch.
5. Pull off the plastic backing to expose the adhesive. Do not touch the sticky surface.
6. Apply the patch firmly with the sticky side down to a **clean, dry, non-hairy area of intact skin**, on the area of the body specified in the instructions supplied with your patches. Press down with the palm of the hand for 30 seconds.
7. Run your finger around the edge of the patch to make sure it is fully sealed to your skin and no air or water can get in. If you have applied it properly the person should be able to bathe, shower and swim without the patch falling off. (Check the printed instructions given with your patches to make sure you are allowed to do this – some patches need to be removed before swimming, showering or bathing.)

8. Wash hands.
9. Record on a body map to indicate where you have applied the patch with the date, and keep with the MAR sheets (some carers like to write the date on the patch – write on the adhesive only edge and not over the reservoir as this may affect the way the medicine is absorbed through the skin).
10. Change the patch as frequently as directed by your doctor or pharmacist. When applying a new patch, remove the old one first and apply the new one to a slightly different area of skin. This avoids irritating the skin.
11. To remove the patch, peel off one corner and pull the patch smoothly and gently away from the skin. Any glue or sticky residue left on the skin can be removed with baby oil.
12. If a patch falls off, replace it with a new one and keep to the patch change days as normal from then on **unless there are specific instructions in the leaflet**.
13. Different types of patch may have different instructions for the application site, when to change the patch and what to do if it falls off. **You should always follow the specific instructions provided with EACH type of patch. If in doubt ask a healthcare professional for advice.**

SPECIFIC DONT's

1. Don't apply to warm damp skin straight after a shower or bath.
2. Don't put moisturiser, creams or powder on the skin immediately before applying the patch, as this may stop it from sticking properly.
3. Don't apply to broken or irritated skin.
4. Never divide or cut a patch unless a healthcare professional has indicated to do so. Record this instruction.
5. Don't use damaged patches if they have been accidentally torn or cut.
6. Do not use patches past their expiry date.

SPECIFIC DOs

1. Do use a body map to assist safe practice. Sometimes patches detach and the body map will indicate where it was last applied.
2. Do check the siting of the patch each day – the body map makes this very easy.
3. Do you know if the patch is a controlled drug (CD) that needs to be recorded in the CD register? If you are not sure- **check**.
4. Do rotate the sites of application to minimise risks of irritation.

Other advice- what if?

- There may be slight redness, irritation or itching of the skin where a patch has been sited. If this doesn't clear up, gets worse or a rash develops, report to line manager/GP.
- Avoid applying patches under tight clothing or elasticated waistbands.
- Applying heat to patches may increase the amount of medicine absorbed into the body. This can increase the risk of side effects and can occur if a person becomes too hot or their temperature rises due to illness. Report to line manager if this occurs.
- If you accidentally put on too many patches, remove the extra one(s) as soon as possible and tell the doctor immediately. *
- If you forget to put a patch on, apply it as soon as you remember. However, do not apply two patches at once to make up for the one you forgot. *
- If the patch accidentally sticks to the skin of another person, remove it immediately and consult your doctor if it has remained on skin for more than 30mins.
- Used patches still contain some medication which may be harmful to children. Immediately after removal, **fold the patch firmly in half so that the sticky sides stick together.** Place in the original sachet (if available) and discard in a sharps or clinical waste bin, or for care homes without nursing, or patients in their own homes, used patches can be put in bin with household rubbish. Never flush down toilets. Wash hands thoroughly before and after handling patches.

*These incidences would need to be reported as a safeguarding incident using an SV1 form which can be obtained through the links below

Bedford Borough Council

<https://www.bedford.gov.uk/social-care-health-and-community/help-for-adults/safeguarding-adults/publications/>

Central Beds Council

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/officeforms/EF1204_Safeguarding_vulnerable_adults.ofml

Additional advice – Fentanyl

Fentanyl patches are potent and have been associated with fatalities. Be aware of signs of overdose which include: difficulty in breathing or shallow breathing; tiredness; extreme sleepiness or sedation; inability to think, walk, or talk normally;

PRN medication – updated and agreed by QA January 2019.

and feeling faint, dizzy, or confused. Report immediately to GP/NHS 111/999 if these symptoms are suspected.