

Fentanyl Patch

Indications for Fentanyl Use

We often place a fentanyl patch on a patient prior to surgery because anticipating and controlling pain can improve a patient's recovery. Fentanyl is a potent opioid and when delivered at a low dose and a constant rate, it provides excellent pain relief with little to no side-effects.

Using the Fentanyl Patch

The fentanyl patch has a fentanyl-containing gel. When properly adhered to a hairless area, the patch begins to be effective about 18 hours later, and can work for up to 4 days. Immediate pain relief may be accomplished with another quick acting pain medication.

Disposal of the Fentanyl Patch

The patch should be removed 5 days after it was applied. It can be peeled off like a band-aid. Fold the patch in half so that the sticky sides stick to itself and throw it away.

We can remove the patch for you. This can be done during a reexamination by the doctor, or you can call to let us know you would like to stop by and have a technician remove it for you.

Side-effects From Low Dose Fentanyl

Side-effects with low dose fentanyl are rare. The most common side-effect is decreased appetite; and much less commonly, sedation, confusion, weakness, wobbliness, and retention of stool or urine. Many of these side-effects are more commonly associated with other medications, spinal cord injury, or anesthesia. Therefore, when these side-effects are noted, we will first consider other causes.

Precautions

Keep the patch out of the reach of children. Accidental use in children is a medical emergency, call your local Poison Control Center or get emergency medical help right away. The design of the patch keeps the gel from getting on your hands or body. If the gel accidentally contacts your skin, the area should be washed with large amounts of water. Do not use soap, alcohol, or other solvents to remove the gel because they may increase the drug's ability to go through the skin. Make sure your pet(s) do not lick or chew the patch. In case of ingestion, please call us.

Please contact us if you notice:

- Not eating for more than 24 hours
- Not drinking for more than 12 hours
- Vomiting blood or vomiting more than once
- Not urinating for more than 24 hours
- Not defecating for more than 5 days
- Black stool
- Losing strength in any limb
- Acting painful, confused, sedate, or drunk