

Fentanyl skin patches: importance of safe use and disposal

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Key messages

- Fentanyl skin ('transdermal') patches are safe and effective for relieving pain when used according to instructions. Always read the leaflet to learn about safe use and possible side effects
- A patch may cause serious harm if it accidentally sticks to somebody else's skin or is swallowed (eg, by a toddler)
- To reduce this risk, please use and dispose of the patch safely:
 - when applying the patch, choose the application site carefully (see instructions on the labelling and in the leaflet that came with the patch). Check that the patch is stuck on securely, especially the edges
 - when disposing of the patch, fold it as soon as it is removed so that the sticky side sticks firmly to itself. Dispose of the folded patch safely so that it is not picked up by others (especially children)
- If a patch is transferred to another person, remove it and get medical help immediately
- If a patch is swallowed, get medical help immediately



What are fentanyl skin patches and what do they do?

Fentanyl skin ('transdermal') patches contain a strong painkiller called fentanyl. The patches are prescribed to help relieve severe, long-lasting pain.

The prescriber carefully considers if a fentanyl patch is suitable for an individual. But if the patch accidentally sticks to somebody else's skin or if somebody (eg, a toddler) swallows it, the medicine can cause serious harm.

What is the new safety information on transdermal fentanyl?

There have been reports of patches accidentally sticking to the skin of people (including children) who were not prescribed them.

Reporting side effects

Please report any suspected side effects to any medicine or vaccine to the Yellow Card Scheme via the website (www.mhra.gov.uk/yellowcard) or by calling the free phone line (0800 731 6789). By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of medicines.