

## Precautions

- DO store your patches in a cool cupboard (not the fridge), out of reach and sight of children
- DO tell health professionals when you go for appointments that you use transdermal analgesia.
- DO NOT let anyone else use your patches
- DO NOT stick on an extra patch unless told to do so by your doctor or nurse
- DO NOT cut or divide the patch unless told to do so by your doctor or nurse.

It is safe to bathe, shower or swim whilst wearing the patch, however, heat will speed up the release of medication from the patch. This may give you too high a dose and make you feel unwell, therefore:

- DO NOT apply a new patch immediately after a bath or shower (allow the skin to cool first)
- DO NOT apply direct heat (e.g. hot water bottle or heat pad, leaning on a radiator) to the area where the patch is
- DO NOT soak in a hot bath, use a sauna or sunbathe while wearing the patch
- DO seek medical advice if you develop a fever whilst wearing the patches. Make efforts to bring your temperature down: keep yourself cool, and take regular drinks.

Stopping strong pain relief suddenly can make people feel unwell; if you want to stop using transdermal analgesia, please discuss this with your doctor or nurse.

If you do stop using the patches, return any unused ones to your pharmacist.

## Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/ department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

### Trust Values

<p>Courtesy and respect</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A welcoming and positive attitude</li> <li>• Polite, friendly and interested in people</li> <li>• Value and respect people as individuals</li> </ul> <p>So people feel <b>welcome</b></p> <p>Attentively kind and helpful</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look out for dignity, privacy &amp; humanity</li> <li>• Attentive, responsive &amp; take time to help</li> <li>• Visible presence of staff to provide care</li> </ul> <p>So people feel <b>cared for</b></p>	<p>Responsive communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to people &amp; answer their questions</li> <li>• Keep people clearly informed</li> <li>• Involve people</li> </ul> <p>So people feel <b>in control</b></p> <p>Effective and professional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe, knowledgeable and reassuring</li> <li>• Effective care / services from joined up teams</li> <li>• Organised and timely, looking to improve</li> </ul> <p>So people feel <b>safe</b></p>
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 The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240

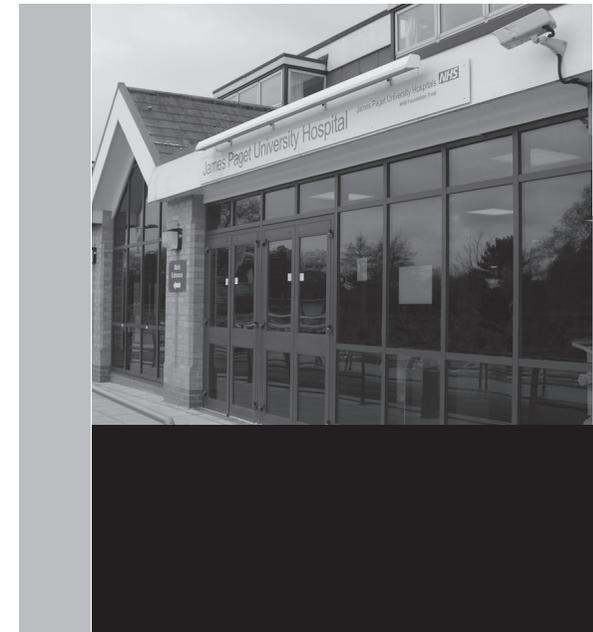
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With content, with kind permission, from and based on "The use of fentanyl patches for palliative care patients", a leaflet produced by NHS Somerset, St Margaret's Hospice, Yeovil District Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and Taunton and Somerset NHS Foundation Trust working in partnership.

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James Paget University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

## Using transdermal analgesia (pain patches) safely



## Information for Patients

## Introduction

This leaflet should be read together with the patient information leaflet supplied with your medicines, along with advice that you receive from the person who prescribed your medicine or your pharmacist.

Please discuss with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you have any queries or concerns about your medicines.

## What is transdermal analgesia?

Transdermal means across the skin, and analgesia means pain relief, so transdermal analgesia is pain relief delivered in the form of a plaster or patch which sticks to your skin.

## Why have I been prescribed transdermal analgesia?

Transdermal analgesia releases its medicine steadily to ensure that you always have a similar amount of pain relief, whatever the time of day or night. This means that it can be effective for pain that is present all the time. It can also be helpful if you find it difficult to swallow tablets, other pain killers do not suit you, or if your kidneys are not working well.

## Which medicines are given in this way?

There are two main pain relief medicines delivered through transdermal patches: fentanyl and buprenorphine. They have a variety of different brand names depending on the manufacturer, but if you look on the box the patches come in you will see either fentanyl or buprenorphine written in smaller print.

## What are the side effects of transdermal analgesia?

People react to different medicines in different ways: some who cannot tolerate one medicine get on very well with another. Many people do not get any side effects, or, if they do, they are mild or short-lasting.

However transdermal analgesia can have similar side effects to any other form of pain relief: the most common side effects are drowsiness, nausea and constipation. In addition, some people have a reaction to the adhesive in the patch and can develop localised skin irritation.

Please read the patient information leaflet specific to the medicine you are taking. This will be in the box with your patches.

If you develop problems using the patches, let your doctor, nurse or pharmacist know.

## How do I use transdermal analgesia?

Peel off the backing and apply the sticky side to the skin. Patches are usually best applied to a flat area of your skin on the upper body: over the chest wall, back or upper arm. Pick a spot where the patch is not likely to be creased or rubbed as you move. Use an area of skin which is not too hairy and has no cuts, spots or grazes. If you are very hairy, clip the hair short with a pair of sharp scissors to help the patch stick: do not use a razor to remove hair as this can leave little breaks in the skin. Make sure that the skin is clean and dry. Do not use the same place all the time: when the patch is changed put the new patch

in a different place and make sure that you don't use the same site within seven days. When you remove the old patch, fold it in half so the sticky side sticks the patch together, and place it directly in the bin. Always wash your hands well after handling the patches

Change the patch as often as instructed in the patient information supplied in the box with your patches. Depending on which patch you have been prescribed, this may be every three, four or seven days. Changing your patch at the right time will ensure that you always maintain a steady level of the medicine in your body. If you are uncertain, please discuss with your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

## What do I do if I forget to change my patch, or the patch falls off?

Apply a new patch as usual. If there has been a long delay you may notice that your pain has been worse: if you do not already have any other pain relief that you have been told is safe to take alongside the patch, contact your nurse or doctor for advice. If your patches keep coming unstuck, discuss this with your doctor or nurse. If a patch gets stuck to someone else, remove it and seek medical advice immediately.