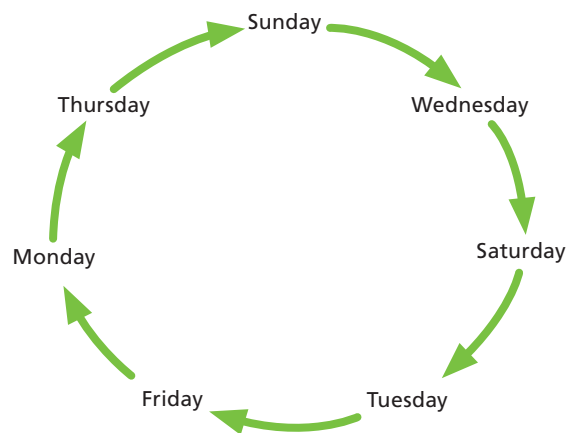


patches look different from those you are used to using, ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist for advice.

The following diagram may be helpful to remind you when to next change your patch. Mark the day on the diagram when you first put your patch(es) on. Then follow the arrow to the next day shown. This is the day when you should next change your patch(es). Keep following the calendar in a clockwise direction.



Use this table to write the current brand and strength of fentanyl patch that you are on. You can update it each time your patch is increased or reduced or if you get a different brand.

Date	Strength of Patch	Brand of Patch

If you would like further information about fentanyl patches you will find a patient information leaflet in the box when you receive your medication.

If you have been prescribed a fentanyl patch for the relief of cancer pain further information can be obtained from Cancer Research UK.

Telephone 0808 800 4040. Monday to Friday 09:00-17:00

Internet : [www.cancerhelp.org.uk](http://www.cancerhelp.org.uk)

This leaflet has been produced by the Palliative Care Team which consists of doctors, nurses and a pharmacist.

The Palliative Care Team can be contacted Monday to Friday 08:30 –16:30 on 0121 697 8475.

The Pharmacy Department can be contacted Monday to Friday 11:00–15:30 on: 0121 627 2319

If you have any concerns about the information provided in this leaflet please contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Services (PALS)

on 0121 627 8820

Selly Oak Monday to Friday 10:00–16:00  
or Queen Elizabeth Monday to Friday 10:00–15:00

or alternatively email: [PALS@uhb.nhs.uk](mailto:PALS@uhb.nhs.uk)

## Patient Information on the Use of Fentanyl Patches

This information will be useful to you if you have been prescribed fentanyl patches for pain relief.

It describes how to use them properly and answers some questions you may have when using them for the first time.

**Pharmacy Department**  
Queen Elizabeth Hospital  
Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TH  
Telephone: 0121 627 7777

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**[www.uhb.nhs.uk](http://www.uhb.nhs.uk)**

## What is a fentanyl patch?

Fentanyl is the name of a drug used to treat moderate to severe pain. It is a strong painkiller related to morphine. The drug is contained within a sticky patch, and when applied to your body, gradually passes through your skin into your bloodstream. Once in your bloodstream, fentanyl acts within your body to relieve your pain.

## How do I use a fentanyl patch?

- Change your fentanyl patch every 72 hours at roughly the same time of day – see the diagram at the end to help you.
- If you are using more than one patch then all the patches should be changed at the same time.
- Take your old patch(es) off and fold each patch in half so that it sticks together. This can then be put into the bin with your household rubbish.
- Choose a place on the upper arm or upper body to stick the new patch. The skin should not have cuts, spots or other blemishes and not be too hairy. The area should also be dry and clean.
- Change/alternate the area where you stick the patch(es) so that one area is not used twice in a row.
- Peel the plastic backing off the new patch(es) and stick firmly onto the chosen area of skin.

## What should I do if I still get pain whilst I have a fentanyl patch on?

Fentanyl patches provide a background of pain relief. As well as the patch you will also be given a quick acting pain killer in case you have pain despite the patch. Reasons you might get pain include;

- When you use fentanyl patches for the first time, or if your dose is increased, it can take a day or more for you to feel the maximum benefit.
- You may experience pain while doing a particular activity despite being on the patch e.g. washing, walking around a lot. If you know an activity is likely to cause you pain, you can take a dose of your quick acting pain relief before you do the activity.
- Sometimes you may experience pain without an obvious cause.

Follow the instructions on the label to know how much of your quick acting pain killer to take. If you require more than 2 or 3 doses of this extra pain killer a day, you must tell your doctor or palliative care nurse. They may advise you to increase the strength of your patch.

## What should I do if the patch falls off or I forget to change it?

Stick a new patch on as soon as you can.

## What side effects should I look out for?

- Drowsiness – if you become unusually sleepy after starting on fentanyl patches, or after the dose has been changed, contact your GP/palliative care nurse/district nurse.
- Skin rashes/irritation – some people have an allergic reaction to the adhesive on the patch.
- Sometimes fentanyl patches do not stick very well to the skin. You may be given a dressing to keep it on by your GP/nurse.

## Whilst you are on a fentanyl patch it is very important that you...

**DO NOT** let anyone else use your patch.

**DO NOT** stick on any extra patches unless told to do so.

**DO NOT** cut or divide the patch.

**DO NOT** apply immediately after a bath/shower – allow the skin to cool first.

**DO NOT** apply direct heat to the area with the patch on e.g. hot water bottle.

## Different brands of patch

There are a few different brands of fentanyl patch available. Where possible you will be given the same brand each time. However, if you notice that your