

Fentanyl Patch Pharmacy Program

Drug	Route	Onset	Peak	Duration	Morphine Equivalent
Fentanyl 25, 50 & 100mcg/hr patches	Transdermal- through the skin	12 hours	20-72 hours Note- the dose stabilizes at a steady state after 6 days of wearing the patches	Each patch lasts for 72 hours	25mcg/hr fentanyl patch = 90mg morphine/day

This program is for daily opioid users who have not been able to stabilize on oral medications alone, and is a great option if you also suffer from chronic pain. This program is not ideal if you think you might miss a lot of doses.

This is off label use of this medication. We do not know if the patch decreases your risk of overdose.

The program is being evaluated, and you will be invited to participate in a research interview if you choose. There is no requirement to meet with the research team in order to be part of this program.

Patch change days will be **Monday, Wednesday and Friday**. Please try your best to make it on these days. This will help you titrate up to a meaningful dose as quickly as possible!

The fentanyl patch provides a consistent steady amount of fentanyl to your body, 24 hours per day. Many people compare the fentanyl patch to the same feeling as muscling fentanyl.

If your patches fall off, please call Columbia St Community Clinic (604 879-7906) as soon as possible to let us know. Please try to locate the patch so it can be returned to the pharmacy. Patches that are unaccounted for are considered diversion, and if this happens multiple times, you may be removed from the program.

Starting the Program

There are 2 options to start.

1. You can choose to continue your current OAT (opioid agonist treatment, ie. methadone) and start at a lower dose of the patch. Ideally you will eventually stop regular OAT and be on the patch alone, but this is not a requirement.

2. You can choose to convert your OAT and start at a higher dose of the patch that has been adjusted for safety. If you choose this option, you will likely need some short acting opioids (like Dilaudid) to bridge you until your Fentanyl Patch dose is high enough.

Increases

- You can increase your dose after 2 patch changes on schedule at the same dose.

Examples:

- If you get patches at 100mcg on Monday and 100mcg on Wednesday, you can increase your dose to 150mcg on Friday.
- If you have patches at 550mcg on Wednesday and 550mcg on Friday, you can increase to 600mcg on Monday.
- Increases cannot be the same day as a patch change, please call the day before.
- To increase either come in person into Columbia Street Clinic or call (604-879-7906) and speak to a doctor on the phone to discuss an increase on the next day.
- It is up to you to tell us when you want to go up on your dose. There is no automatic titration.
- There is no maximum dose, you can continue to go up on the dose until you are comfortable.
- The titration period will take a few weeks, but can be longer if you miss doses. You can expect to call or come into the clinic 1-2 times per week for about 5 weeks. Once you are on your comfortable dose, you will have 3 month long prescriptions, but can drop in any time to check in or adjust your dose.

Missed doses

- Your dose will not decrease for 5 days after a missed patch change.
- If you miss a dose you can receive the dose for up to 5 days
 - Example: You miss a patch change on Monday, you can receive the same dose Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. On Saturday the script will be canceled and you will need to speak to a doctor to start again.
- If you go 6 days without a change, your script will be canceled. You will need to speak to a doctor to start again at a decreased dose.

- There are no weekend restarts for the patch program.

Applying/Removing patches:

Some pharmacies apply your patches for you, while others expect you to be responsible for applying and removing patches.

All patches that are removed will need to be accounted for, with no signs of tampering, before new patches are given. Discuss with your pharmacy if they want to see you remove them or if they would rather you return them.

When applying patches, place your hand over the patch for about 30 seconds – this will help it stick better to the skin. Discuss with your pharmacy if they want to see you apply them.

Side Effects/Risks:

- Fentanyl patches have the side effects and risks as all other opioids, including risk of overdose, hormone changes, constipation, bradycardia (slow heart rate), sleep disturbance, lower bone density.
- Some people can have a reaction on their skin where they are applying patches. If this happens to you please come to the clinic to discuss options to help.
- Please keep away from pets.

Please feel free to contact us with any other questions or concerns!