
Middlesex-London

Shared Responsibility

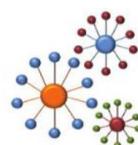
Fentanyl Patch Return Program

Fentanyl Patch 4 Patch Return Policy

This “Fentanyl Patch 4 Patch” Return Policy has been established in other communities across the Province for the purpose of public education and awareness regarding the risks of fentanyl abuse and misuse. The policy is not meant to complicate the treatment of pain management but to guarantee the responsible provision of fentanyl and to reduce any possible criminal diversion of fentanyl. It is important to address the issue of proper fentanyl patch disposal to avoid harm to members of the community.

1) **PHYSICIAN RESPONSIBILITIES**

- a) **Patient Education:** Accurate and thorough patient/family education is essential in promoting safe use of fentanyl patches. The physician will also caution the patient/family to store the patches in a secure place and to follow the procedure to keep track of the number of patches they have, to decrease the risk of accidental misuse by others.
- b) **Prescriptions:** Physicians are discouraged from writing large number of prescribed fentanyl patches to be dispensed by the pharmacy. It is recommended that **no more than “10 fentanyl patches will be dispensed” at once** (one patch every 72 hours x 10 = 30 days). It is recommended that prescriptions direct the pharmacist to **collect used or unused patches before dispensing the next set of patches**. Physicians will determine from their patients which pharmacy and location they utilize for their pharmaceutical needs. When possible, the physician should **write on the prescription the actual pharmacy and location** in which the prescription will be dispensed to prevent prescription duplication. Whenever possible, the prescription will be faxed to that specific pharmacy.
- c) **When a patient does not return patches:** The pharmacist will notify the physician immediately. The physician is responsible for acknowledging the pharmacy as soon as possible. Documentation should reflect the prescription issue and communication between the physician and pharmacist.



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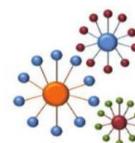
**Adapted from North Bay & Area Drug Strategy.*

When patches **are not** returned, the pharmacist will dispense one patch during the prescribed dosing period (i.e. daily, 48 hrs, 72 hrs) until the pharmacist is able to contact the physician or vice versa. This will be referred to as the **CONTINGENT DISPENSING PROTOCOL**.

2) PHARMACIST RESPONSIBILITIES

- a) **Patient Education:** Accurate and thorough patient/family education is essential in promoting safe use of fentanyl patches. The pharmacy will caution the patient/family to store the patches in a secure place, to keep track of the number of patches they have, and to follow the return process to decrease the risk of misuse by others.
- b) **Counseling Patient/Family on Fentanyl:**
Provide "Fentanyl Patch Return Program - Return Sheet & What You Need to Know" with the bagged fentanyl prescription.
- Explain to the patient/family that they are required to tape each removed/used patch flat on the return sheet.
 - Explain that the person placing the patch on the return sheet should date and initial beside the patch.
 - Explain to the patient/family that they will not be able to receive more patches if the current patches are not returned to the pharmacy.
 - Educate on the importance of the Fentanyl Return Policy and the need for such a policy.
- c) **Return Procedure:**
- Count the fentanyl patches returned and inspect them for any damage or tampering.
 - Document the date and the number of patches returned in the patient's file.
 - Report all suspicious use or abuse to the physician and communicate this to the patient/family if applicable.
 - At any point if the pharmacist believes that a criminal offence has occurred he/she **MAY** report their concerns to the local Police agency.
- d) **When a patient does not return patches:** The pharmacist will notify the physician immediately. The physician is responsible for acknowledging the pharmacy as soon as possible. Documentation should reflect the prescription issue and communication between the physician and pharmacist.

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3) PHARMACY TECHNICIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

- a) When filling a fentanyl prescription, place the comment “return to pharmacy, once used” at the end of the sig. (Quick code – “fent”).
- b) When counting a fentanyl prescription, place a “Fentanyl Patch Return Program – Return Sheet and What You Need to Know” with the filled prescription to be attached by the pharmacist.
- c) Document the date and the number of patches returned in the patient’s file.
- d) Any questions regarding the Fentanyl Return Policy can be referred to the Pharmacist, if needed.
- e) Place returned patches in environmental disposal bins and destroy as per pharmacy protocol.

4) DEATHS

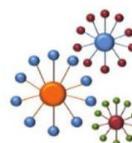
- a) Request family members of the deceased to return any unused/used fentanyl patches and other prescription medication to a local pharmacy for proper disposal.
- b) Sudden Death cases where Police attend the scene, medications will be secured and dealt with as per the policy of the local Police agency.

5) FOLLOW-UP

- a) Evaluation of the process will be done in six months. Any issues can be forwarded to Staff Sergeant Henry Pateman, London Police Service, or Rhonda Brittan RN, Public Health Nurse, Middlesex London Health Unit.

Henry Pateman
Staff Sergeant
Community Support Section
Uniformed Division
London Police Service
519-661-4798
HPateman@police.london.ca

Rhonda Brittan
Public Health Nurse
Middlesex London Health Unit
519-663-5317 X2252
Rhonda.Brittan@mlhu.on.ca



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