



NORTH BAY & AREA FENTANYL PATCH 4 PATCH RETURN PROCEDURE

This *Fentanyl Patch 4 Patch Return Procedure* has been established for North Bay & Area for the purpose of public education and awareness regarding fentanyl abuse and misuse. The procedure is not meant to complicate pain management, but to guarantee the responsible provision, use, and disposal of such a potentially deadly drug. It is also important to address the issue of disposal of fentanyl patches properly, to avoid harm to others.

PHYSICIANS' 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. The physician will also ensure that the patient/family understands the proper steps that are to be followed when returning used fentanyl patches to the pharmacy.

Review the "*Used Fentanyl Patches Medication Disposal Sheet*" (Appendix A).

It is imperative to advise your patients that if the steps **are not followed** as outlined, their **prescription will not be refilled** until you can be notified and approve.

If your patient should be admitted to a hospital and their fentanyl patch *has been removed by hospital staff*, advise the patient to obtain documentation upon discharge from the facility that their patch was, removed on admission, dated and signed by the attending physician so they have verification when they have their prescription refilled.

(b) **Prescriptions**

Physicians are cautioned not to prescribe large numbers of fentanyl patches for the pharmacists to dispense. It is recommended that no more than **10 fentanyl patches be dispensed** at once (one patch every 72 hours x 10 = 30 days).

Physicians will determine from their patients **which pharmacy and location** they utilize for their medication management. The physician **must write** on the prescription the **actual pharmacy and location** in which the prescription will be dispensed. Whenever possible the prescription will be faxed to that pharmacy by the physician's office.

(c) **Contingency Plan**

If the patient/family has only one patch to return, or the quantity differs from the expected amount to be returned, the pharmacy will only dispense **one fentanyl patch** and will notify the physician immediately by fax or phone. The physician is responsible for responding to the pharmacy as soon as possible in writing or by phone.



- (d) **Physician & Patient Agreement for Use & Termination of Fentanyl Patch Treatment**
Physicians prescribing fentanyl patches will ensure that their patient *understands* that they **cannot alter** their patches in any way, or **sell or provide their** prescribed fentanyl patches to any other person(s) *without consequences*.
Patients will be required to sign their “Pharmacy Fentanyl Patch 4 Patch Return Disposal Sheet” that states that they acknowledge that they are aware that if any of their attached patches are found to be **counterfeit or altered**, they could face Criminal Charges. If the pharmacy determines that the patches are counterfeit or altered, the family physician and police service will be notified immediately, by phone or fax.

PHARMACY 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, and to follow the procedure to keep track of the number of patches they have, to decrease the risk of accidental misuse by others. Patches are not to be disposed of in any other manner than by return to the pharmacy as outlined in this policy.

(b) **Counselling Patients/Family on Fentanyl**

- Attach a provided “Used Fentanyl Patch Medication Disposal Sheet” (Appendix A) to the bagged fentanyl prescription.
- Review the Pharmacy Fentanyl Patch 4 Patch Return Disposal Guidelines
- Explain that this system is a program only to promote safe, effective and responsible use of the fentanyl patch.
- Instruct the patient to store their fentanyl patches (**new and used**) in a safe and secure place in their home, and to keep them out of the reach of all, especially children and pets.
- Demonstrate how they should stick the used patch on the sheet in the numbered box, placing just the patch flat so that it is totally visible.
- Instruct them to tape only the four corners of the patch with a small amount of tape. Inform them that they must return **all of patches to have their prescription refilled**.
- When their prescription is filled, require them to **date, sign, and witness** the Pharmacy Fentanyl Patch 4 Patch Return Disposal Sheet (Guidelines for Returning) that states: By signing this form, I am acknowledging that I am aware that if any of the attached ***Fentanyl Patches*** are found to be counterfeit, I could face ***Criminal Charges***.
- Inform them that if the guidelines are not followed, they will not have their fentanyl prescription refilled until the proper procedure is followed and/or their Family Physician is notified and agrees.
- When a patient **does not return all patches** the pharmacist will initiate the contingency plan. Notify the physician immediately.
- **At any point** if the pharmacist believes that a Criminal offense has occurred he/she shall cause a report to be forwarded to the local police agency/or immediately notify the local police agency. This is a basic responsible, professional, and ethical requirement.

(c) **Pharmacist Procedure When Patient Applies for Refill of Fentanyl Prescription**

- Count the fentanyl patches returned, inspect them for any damage or tampering
- Report all suspicious use or misuse to the physician and communicate this to the patient.



- Advise the patient that, if they should be admitted to a hospital and their fentanyl patch is removed by hospital staff, they must have the hospital staff document that fact on discharge, including the date of removal and signature of the attending physician. This can then be presented to the pharmacy as verification when they have their prescription refilled.
- Destroy the returned patches daily using gloves and scissors. Place in the environmental bins.

(d) Contingency Plan When Fentanyl Patches Are Not Returned Properly

If the patient does not return their patches, or only returns partial quantities of patches, the contingency plan will immediately be implemented: the pharmacy will only dispense one fentanyl patch and will notify the physician immediately by fax or phone. The physician is responsible for acknowledging the pharmacy as soon as possible in writing or by phone. If the pharmacist determines that the patches are counterfeit, the family physician and police service will be notified immediately, by fax or phone.

OTHER

- **Procedure when leaving the country**
 - The patient will require two (2) letters from their physician; one letter for **their pharmacy** stating they are travelling out of country. Indicate the dates they will be away and the number of patches they require and that the patient must return used patches to their pharmacy upon return to have their prescription refilled. (same procedure as above)
 - Second letter from physician is for **Customs/Border Security** as to why they have they have Fentanyl Patches. Ensure that letter and Fentanyl patches are secure within the pharmacy labelled box with Prescription Return sheets.
- When a patient expires at home under the care of Allied Home Care such as CCAC, the Home Care staff are to return the fentanyl patches and attached forms to the pharmacy that dispensed them, and advise the physician.
- Sudden death cases when police attended the scene and secure the medications the procedure of disposal of fentanyl will be reviewed by the individual policing agencies with an internal policy.
- Data for evaluation of the process, and all issues and concerns, will be captured and addressed by the North Bay Drug Strategy Committee for follow-up and action with the appropriate partners.

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