

OPIOID PATCH SAFETY: COUNSELLING CHECKLIST

- If the patient is calling back, please attach a counselling required note.
- Appropriate health professional to issue prescriptions (e.g. assistant technical officers or students are **not** to issue these prescriptions without supervision).

Patient details

For completion by the clinical checker						
	Yes	No	Comment			
A	Has the patient received this treatment before? <i>Check that not opioid-naive</i>					
B	Has the dose changed?					
C	Is the brand of opioid patch the same as previously used?					
D	Double-check for drug interactions when new items are prescribed					
E	Has the patient been given information on breakthrough pain relief?					
F	Presence of PIL within the packaging					
Counselling checklist: For completion by the counsellor						
Check the patient knows:			Yes	No	Already aware	
a	• How many patches to apply and how often					
b	• To choose the patch application site carefully and to not apply to the same site twice in a row (see PIL)					
c	• To not apply the patch to broken, irritated or irradiated skin. Ensure skin is non-hairy and dry before application. If necessary, cut hair with scissors; do not shave the area before applying a patch					
d	• Never to cut the patch					
e	• The process for applying the patch (refer to PIL): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Remove old patch and carefully fold it over so sticky sides are stuck together. Put back in its original pouch and safely dispose of it out of discovery of children/animals – Apply new patch (avoid touching sticky sides) – Press patch firmly in place for 30–60 seconds and wash hands afterwards 					
f	• That it may be helpful to use a calendar to record day of application					
g	• That the patch may not start or stop working straight away					
h	• If the patch falls off, start another patch. Do not re-use patch. If the edge of the patch starts to peel, use suitable tape (e.g. white surgical tape, transparent adhesive film dressing) to secure the patch					
i	• To keep patches out of sight/reach/discovery of children and animals and to seek immediate medical attention if patch is swallowed, or it is applied to the skin of anyone other than the patient. Patches are not plasters! Incidents have involved children mimicking what they have seen others do. <i>Deaths</i> have occurred where children have removed patches from co-sleeping adults. Wearing an item of clothing over the patch when sharing a bed with children or a partner is recommended. <i>Deaths</i> have also occurred where children have swallowed discarded/'fallen-off' patches					
j	• The effect of heat on patch. Avoid applying external heat sources against/near the patch, e.g. hot water bottles, heat pads or heat blankets. Avoid hot tubs and saunas. Caution about long hot baths. Keep the patch area out of excessive sun. Store patches away from heat sources. Seek urgent medical advice if feverish. <i>The body can absorb too much medicine if patch is exposed to excessive heat</i>					
k	• Signs and symptoms of too much medicine and what to do. Seek medical attention immediately if trouble breathing, or shallow/very slow breathing; extreme sleepiness or sedation; inability to think/walk/talk normally; feeling faint, confused or more dizzy than usual					
l	• That opioid patches may cause drowsiness and affect ability to drive/operate machinery. Do not drive/operate machinery if affected. Alcohol may potentiate these effects					
m	• To use a regular community pharmacy and seek their advice when buying OTC/herbal products (e.g. <i>antifungals for thrush, antihistamines</i>)					
n	• To bring medicines/current medicines list to clinic/hospital/attend out-of-hours services/dentist/A&E/for scans, X-rays or any hospital procedures. <i>Medicine-containing patches cannot be worn during an MRI scan</i>					
Discussed with:		Counselled by:	Information to patient/carer <input type="checkbox"/>	Documented (e.g. on PMR/MUR) <input type="checkbox"/>	Date:	

The *Opioid Patch Information to Keep Patients Safe* (available in [English](#) and [Welsh](#)) should be given to patients to serve as a reminder of the safety issues discussed regarding the use and storage of their opioid patches. It should therefore be given to the patient after completing this checklist.