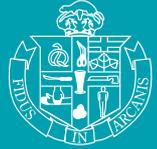


PATCH-FOR-PATCH FENTANYL RETURN PROGRAM: FACT SHEET



In an effort to combat the abuse, misuse, and diversion of prescription fentanyl patches, the provincial government has passed legislation¹ which requires patients who receive a prescription for fentanyl to return their used patches to a pharmacy before receiving new ones.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) and Ontario College of Pharmacists (OCP) strongly support this legislation, as well as the government's approach to delineate specific roles and responsibilities for physicians and pharmacists when prescribing and dispensing fentanyl patches.

Requirements of the legislation:

WHEN PRESCRIBING FENTANYL PATCHES:

1 Prescribers must record on every prescription for fentanyl the name and address of the pharmacy where the prescription will be filled.

2 Prescribers must notify the pharmacy that each prescription has been written, either by faxing a copy of the prescription to the pharmacy or by telephone.

3 When writing a patient's first prescription for fentanyl, prescribers must note "first prescription" on the prescription itself.² A prescription is considered a "first prescription" when:

- i. The prescriber has not previously prescribed a fentanyl patch for that patient; and
- ii. The prescriber is reasonably satisfied that the patient has not previously obtained a prescription for fentanyl patches from another prescriber.³

WHEN DISPENSING FENTANYL PATCHES:

This is a partial list of the requirements for dispensers under the legislation. For a complete list, click here.⁴

1 Dispensers must confirm that the name and location of the pharmacy is recorded on the prescription by the prescriber, and that the pharmacy has been notified by the prescriber of the prescription before any patches are dispensed.

2 Unless a first time prescription, dispensers must only dispense fentanyl patches in exchange for used patches provided by the patient or his or her authorized representative.

3 Dispensers must examine and document returned patches, and store them in a secure location.

4 Where a dispenser receives a prescription for fentanyl patches but does not collect all of the patient's used patches, or collects fewer patches than the quantity to be dispensed under the prescription, he or she must:

- i. Use his or her professional judgment to dispense an appropriate number of patches based on an assessment of the patient, including an assessment of the patient's circumstances and the patient's medical condition; and
- ii. Notify the prescribing physician of the number of used patches that were collected as well as the number of new patches that were dispensed, if any.

Supplementary guidance for physicians:

Where applicable, the above requirements regarding fentanyl patches have been incorporated into the CPSO's Prescribing Drugs policy. The following guidance is intended to assist physicians in addressing anticipated practical issues that arise under the legislation:

- 1 Clearly communicate with patients:** Physicians who prescribe fentanyl patches must ensure that patients understand the importance of keeping track of every patch that is dispensed, whether it is used or unused, as failing to do so may result in lost or stolen patches. Failing to return all used patches to the pharmacy may result in the pharmacist withholding new patches.
- 2 Respect patient choice of pharmacy:** Patients are entitled to choose the pharmacy that will fill the prescription.
- 3 Collaborate professionally with pharmacists:** A patch-for-patch program requires physicians and pharmacists to work in close partnership to ensure that patches are safely prescribed, dispensed, stored, and returned to the pharmacy. Physicians who prescribe fentanyl patches must respond in a timely and professional manner when contacted by a pharmacist to confirm the validity of a prescription, to raise questions or concerns regarding the patches that have been returned or, where used patches have not been returned, to seek advice with respect to dispensing new patches based on the patient's specific circumstances.
- 4 Where patients fail to return used patches:** Where a patient fails to return all of their used patches, and it is not the patient's first prescription, the regulation permits the pharmacist to use his or her professional judgment to dispense an appropriate number of new patches based on the specific circumstances of the patient. In all cases, pharmacists must notify the prescribing physician that used patches were not returned, and the number of new patches that were dispensed, if any.

Supplementary guidance for pharmacists:

To review the Ontario College of Pharmacists' supplementary guidance for dispensing pharmacists, click [here](#)⁵.

¹ *Safeguarding our Communities Act, 2015.*

² This notation will confirm for the dispensing pharmacist that the patient is not required to return previously used patches in order for the prescription to be filled.

³ Prescribers can be "reasonably satisfied" based on a discussion with the patient and any other information available to the prescriber.

⁴ OCP's Fact Sheet for pharmacists.

⁵ *Ibid.*