

Patch for Patch Return Policy

Frequently Asked Questions for Health Professionals

What is the Patch for Patch Return Policy?

The Government of Ontario passed legislation titled [Safeguarding our Communities Act \(Patch for Patch Return Policy\)](#) on October 1, 2016. It requires all patients who receive a prescription of fentanyl patches to return their patches to a pharmacy before receiving new ones. This is an effort to reduce abuse, misuse and diversion of prescription fentanyl patches. This legislation is supported by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, and the Ontario College of Pharmacists. In general, it applies a “one for one” model, where patients are required to return patches, whether used or unused, to the pharmacy, before the next prescription is filled.

What are physicians required to write on the prescription?

See [Patch-for Patch Fentanyl Return Program: Fact sheet](#) by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. It is suggested prescribing physicians limit prescriptions to a 30-day supply (typically 10 patches) at a time. In keeping with typical practice, any concerns by the pharmacist should be discussed with the prescriber.

How do I discuss this program with patients to avoid stigma?

Discussing this program with patients in a calm, non-judgmental and supportive manner will help them to understand that the program is being implemented for all patients in Ontario prescribed fentanyl in order to: address concerns for public safety; to reduce incidents of overdose (e.g. children and pets); to comply with safe disposal of expired medication; to reduce potential diversion of new and used patches; and to reduce environmental impacts.

How should the patches be stored?

See Also see [Patch-for Patch Fentanyl Return Program: Fact sheet](#) by the Ontario College of Pharmacists. Patients should be instructed to not leave patches, whether used or unused, out in the open and to store patches in a secure location away from pets and children.

How should patches be returned?

Pharmacies need to instruct patients on how they would like patients to return used patches to them. One possible recommendation is for patients to stick their used patches onto a Patch Return Record Sheet, in sequential order, so that each patch can easily be recognized and accounted for. Alternatively, patients may put used patches back into their packaging and then back into the original box. Once returned to the pharmacy, the patches should be inspected for signs of counterfeit and/or tampering prior to being placed into the pharmacy’s drug disposal bin to be removed and destroyed as per existing practices.

A cornerstone of the Patch for Patch Return Policy is the need for patients to be educated about the risks of patches, whether used or unused, and the need for safe disposal at pharmacies. Both physicians and pharmacists have an obligation to educate

patients on the Patch for Patch Return Policy. This model builds on existing practices of patients returning unused and expired medications to their local pharmacy safely.

For the first prescription there will be only 9 out of 10 patches returned?

Yes, that is expected to be a one-time occurrence and should be documented by the pharmacist.

What if the patient is only prescribed a single prescription with no repeats?

Encouraging the return of all patches is safest; even if the patient is not prescribed additional patches.

How do we handle a vacation supply?

The pharmacist should request the patient to provide evidence of their travel dates prior to dispensing more patches than the standard prescription. The patient must return the quantity of patches that they received in their last order. If they are receiving a larger quantity than usual, they must return the same number, in order to receive the next prescription, even if it is for a smaller quantity than the current prescription. It will be important to document such changes.

What if a patient brings in a new prescription to our pharmacy but has no patches to return?

If the prescription is ongoing and changing from another pharmacy, they should bring in the old patches to receive the new ones. This may help to avoid patients changing pharmacies to divert medications. The pharmacist may phone the prescribing physician and previous pharmacy to validate the prescription and to collect patient history.

How do I handle a delivery situation?

Pharmacy delivery personnel are considered agents of the pharmacy and should be advised of the need to collect used patches from patients. Agents can be involved in the collection and return of used patches to the pharmacy, similar to how they collect: money, drug cards, expired medications, and other items such as signatures under Ontario's Narcotic Monitoring System. It would be advisable for both the patient and delivery personnel to sign the Ontario Narcotic Monitoring System delivery record to indicate that they picked up used patches from the patient. Drivers should be provided clear plastic bags or envelopes in which to store the Opioid Patch Return Record Sheet.

What happens when a patient brings back fewer patches than what they were given?

Pharmacists are required to notify the prescribing physician of the number of patches that were collected as well as the number of new patches that were dispensed, if any. Every instance where a patient returns fewer patches than what was given to them must be documented. The pharmacist is to use their professional judgement 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. For

example, if a patient returns 8 patches, whether used or unused, at a minimum, the pharmacist should only dispense 8 new patches in the next prescription. If there is a pattern of the patient not returning all of the patches dispensed to them, the pharmacist may decide to only dispense one patch at a time and have the patient see their physician to decide if it is appropriate to continue the prescription in its current format.

Who do I notify if I feel there is an issue with diversion?

The medication should not be dispensed, and the prescribing physician should be notified. The occurrence should be documented by both the pharmacist and physician.

What if I suspect a counterfeit patch?

Advise the patient that it is an indictable offense to unlawfully obtain narcotics and that they must bring in all the original used patches before you can dispense more. Consult with prescribing physician and determine if notifying Durham Region Police is needed.

Where can I refer patients who require help to address substance use?

[Pinewood Centre of Lakeridge Health](#) will continue to receive referrals from all sources, including self, physician, pharmacist etc. (Go to their [website](#) for site locations across Durham)

- Physician referrals to opioid treatment services will be expedited and the program will strive to see new clients within ten (10) business days
- Consultations regarding opioid misuse, treatment options, and/or the Opioid Patch Return Program may be directed to Client Care Manager, Community Treatment Services, Pinewood Centre (905-683-5950 ext. 229)

Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) Clinics provide people with immediate help, short-term addiction treatment and counselling until they can be connected to longer-term supports and programs. The clinics can be accessed by telephone (905-576-8711 ext. 37226) and on a walk-in basis:

- [Lakeridge Health Oshawa](#), 1 Hospital Crt., Oshawa, ON, L1G 8A2
 - Monday and Thursday, 9 to 11am
 - 905-576-8711 ext. 37226
- [Pinewood Centre](#), 300 Centre St., Oshawa, ON, L1H 2K5
 - Tuesday and Friday, 9 to 11am
 - (905-576-8711 ext. 37226):

Out of Region RAAM Clinics

- [Peterborough Regional Health Centre](#), 159 King St. Suite 302-2, Peterborough, ON, K9J 2R8
 - Monday, Wednesday & Friday, 8am to 12pm
 - 705-749-9708
- [Scarborough Health Network](#), Crockford Pavilion, 3050 Lawrence Ave. E, Scarborough, ON, M1P 2V5
 - Tuesday, Thursday & Friday 9 to 11am
 - -431-8269