

Consumers Can Help Prevent
Harmful Medication Incidents

SafeMedicationUse.ca Newsletter

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Medication Patch Safety: Remove Your Old Patch before Applying a New One

Medication patches deliver medication through your skin. Examples of medications that can be delivered this way include nicotine replacement, fentanyl, and nitroglycerin. A used patch may still contain medication. **Before a new patch is applied, the old patch must be removed to prevent harmful side effects.**

ISMP Canada received a report about a person who was wearing several nitroglycerin patches. They did not know to remove the old patch before applying a new one. Multiple nitroglycerin patches can lead to low blood pressure and raise the risk of falling. Fortunately, no harm came to the person.

Tips to help you use medication patches safely:

- **Remove your old patch before applying a new one.**
 - Follow your health care provider's instructions on how often to change patches.
 - Keep track of when you change patches (for example, using a calendar) to help with changing patches on time.
 - If you realize that you've been wearing more than one patch at a time, remove the old patch right away and contact your health care provider for advice
 - **Dispose of used patches safely – they still contain medication.**
 - Keep used patches out of reach of children and pets.
 - Fold the used patch in half with the sticky sides together.
 - Place the used patch in a sealed container or plastic bag before throwing it away or returning it to your pharmacy.
- Avoid flushing patches down the toilet.**



Health Canada provides information about the safe disposal of medications:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/safe-disposal-prescription-drugs.html>

This newsletter was developed in collaboration with Best Medicines Coalition and [Patients for Patient Safety Canada](#). Recommendations are shared with healthcare providers, through the ISMP Canada Safety Bulletin, so that changes can be made together. This newsletter shares information about safe medication practices, is noncommercial, and is therefore exempt from Canadian anti-spam legislation.