

Characteristics of Transdermal Patches

For information on similarities among most available patches, including application, exposure to heat, disposal, and the appropriateness of cutting patches, see our checklist, *Dos and Don'ts With Patches*. Use the chart below to determine how to address common questions associated with individual patches, including exposure to water and what to do if patches fall off, as these may be different from patch to patch.

For guidance about when patches can be cut, see our checklist *Dos and Don'ts With Patches*.

**Do NOT cut or alter any drug patch (regardless of the delivery system) when exact dosing is critical (e.g., contraceptives, buprenorphine, fentanyl).*

Please note that this table provides information about many brand name and generic patches, yet there may be other generics patches available that are not listed. Information may be different for generic products. Products listed on the chart are representative and may not be all-inclusive.

Medication/ Brand Name	Delivery System ^a	Appearance ^a	What if the patch becomes loose or falls off? ^a	Exposure to water ^a
Buprenorphine (<i>BuTrans</i>)	Matrix Note: Do NOT cut or alter any drug patch (regardless of the delivery system) when exact dosing is critical.	Beige, rectangular or square (varies with dose), imprinted with drug name and strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If patch becomes loose, may tape edges with first-aid tape, being sure not to cover any printing on the patch. • If patch falls off, replace with a new patch, rotating sites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Applying a new patch, starts a new dosing interval. ○ If two patches are worn at the same time and one falls off, remove the other patch; apply two new patches, rotating sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal exposure to water should not affect patch (e.g., bathing, swimming) other than possibly loosening the adhesive.
Estradiol (<i>Climara</i>)	Matrix	Translucent, oval Estradot: Transparent, rectangular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If patch falls off, apply a new patch, rotating sites and follow same dosing schedule. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal exposure to water should not affect patch (e.g., bathing, swimming) other than possibly loosening the adhesive.
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Medication/ Brand Name	Delivery System ^a	Appearance ^a	What if the patch becomes loose or falls off? ^a	Exposure to water ^a
Estradiol , continued Product information is the same as <i>Climara</i> unless otherwise noted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Estradot</i> • <i>Oesclim</i> • <i>Sandoz Estradiol Derm</i> 		<i>Oesclim</i> : Beige, rectangular, foam-like <i>Sandoz Estradiol Derm</i> : Transparent, oval	<i>Estradot, Oesclim, and Sandoz Estradiol Derm</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If patch becomes loose or falls off, the same patch may be reapplied, rotating sites. • If unable to reapply, apply a new patch, rotating sites, and follow same dosing schedule. 	
Estradiol/ Norethindrone (<i>Estalis</i>)	Matrix	Round	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If patch becomes loose or falls off, the same patch may be reapplied, rotating sites. • If unable to reapply, apply a new patch, rotating sites, and follow same dosing schedule. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal exposure to water should not affect patch (e.g., bathing, swimming) other than possibly loosening the adhesive.
Estradiol/ Norelgestromin (<i>Evra</i>)	Matrix Note: Do NOT cut or alter any drug patch (regardless of the delivery system) when exact dosing is critical.	Beige, plastic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use tapes or wraps to keep the patch in place. • If patch becomes loose or falls off for up to 24 hours, attempt to reapply it or apply a new patch, and follow same dosing schedule. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No backup contraception needed. • If patch falls off for >24 hours or an unknown amount of time, apply a new patch, rotating sites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Backup contraception needed for the first week of the new cycle. ○ New patch begins a new four-week cycle. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal exposure to water should not affect patch (e.g., bathing, swimming) other than possibly loosening the adhesive.²

Medication/ Brand Name	Delivery System ^a	Appearance ^a	What if the patch becomes loose or falls off? ^a	Exposure to water ^a
Fentanyl <i>(Duragesic [brand no longer available])</i> Generics (information is the same for all fentanyl patches, unless otherwise noted): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>pms-Fentanyl MTX</i> • <i>Sandoz Fentanyl</i> • <i>Teva-Fentanyl</i> 	Matrix Note: Do NOT cut or alter any drug patch (regardless of the delivery system) when exact dosing is critical.	Rectangular, imprinted with drug name and strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If patch becomes loose, may use first-aid tape on the edges, or cover with transparent adhesive dressing. • If patch falls off, apply a new patch, rotating sites. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Applying a new patch, starts a new dosing interval. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal exposure to water should not affect patch (e.g., bathing, swimming) other than possibly loosening the adhesive.
Lidocaine/Prilocaine <i>(EMLA)</i>	Absorbent cellulose disc	Tan adhesive tape with a round white pad in the center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patches should only be worn for a maximum of five hours; therefore, it is unlikely that patches will become loose or fall off. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patches should only be worn for a maximum of five hours; therefore, water exposure should not be an issue.
Nicotine <i>(NicoDerm, Habitrol)</i> Information is for <i>NicoDerm</i> and <i>Habitrol</i> as noted.	<i>NicoDerm</i> : ^{3,6} Reservoir <i>Habitrol</i> : ⁶ Matrix	<i>NicoDerm</i> : Transparent, rectangular ³ <i>Habitrol</i> : Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If patch becomes loose, may use medical adhesive tape (<i>NicoDerm</i>).¹ • If patch falls off, apply a new patch, rotating sites.^{a,1} <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Continue with same dosing schedule (<i>Habitrol</i>).^a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal exposure to water should not affect patch (e.g., bathing, swimming) other than possibly loosening the adhesive.¹
Nitroglycerin <i>(Nitro-Dur)</i> Generics (information is the same as brand unless otherwise noted): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mylan-Nitro</i> • <i>Transderm-Nitro</i> • <i>Trinipatch</i> 	Matrix <i>Transderm Nitro</i> : Reservoir	Tan, round Mylan-Nitro : Translucent, rectangular, imprinted with drug name and strength Transderm-Nitro : Tan, rectangular	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If patch falls off, apply a new patch, rotating sites, and follow same dosing schedule. <i>Nitro-Dur</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If patch falls off, clean the skin, apply a new patch, rotating sites.⁴ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal exposure to water should not affect patch (e.g., bathing, swimming) other than possibly loosening the adhesive. • Showering is safe to do while wearing the patch.

Medication/ Brand Name	Delivery System ^a	Appearance ^a	What if the patch becomes loose or falls off? ^a	Exposure to water ^a
Oxybutynin (<i>Oxytrol</i>)	Matrix	Translucent, rectangular, imprinted with drug name and strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If patch falls completely off, may attempt to reapply. • If unable to reapply, apply a new patch, rotating sites, and follow same dosing schedule. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal exposure to water should not affect patch (e.g., bathing, swimming) other than possibly loosening the adhesive.
Rivastigmine (<i>Exelon</i>) Generics (information is the same as brand unless otherwise noted): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mylan-Rivastigmine</i> • <i>Rivastigmine Patch</i> [Strides Pharma Canada], • <i>Sandoz Rivastigmine Patch</i> 	Matrix	Beige, round, plastic, imprinted with drug name, strength, and the following letters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AMCX (5 mg) • BHDI (10 mg) • CNFU (15 mg) Mylan, Sandoz: Peach, imprinted with drug name and strength Rivastigmine (Strides): White, imprinted with drug name	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If patch falls off, apply a new patch, rotating sites, and follow same dosing schedule. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal exposure to water should not affect patch (e.g., bathing, swimming) other than possibly loosening the adhesive.
Rotigotine (<i>Neupro</i>)	Matrix	Beige, square, imprinted with an identification mark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If patch becomes loose, may use first-aid tape on the edges. • If patch falls off, apply a new patch, rotating sites, and follow same dosing schedule. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal exposure to water should not affect patch (e.g., bathing, swimming) other than possibly loosening the adhesive.

Medication/ Brand Name	Delivery System ^a	Appearance ^a	What if the patch becomes loose or falls off? ^a	Exposure to water ^a
Scopolamine* (<i>Transderm-V</i>) *licensed natural health product	Reservoir ⁶	Tan, disc ⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If patch falls off, apply a new patch behind the other ear.⁵	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Normal exposure to water should not affect patch (e.g., bathing, swimming) other than possibly loosening the adhesive.⁵
Testosterone (<i>Androderm</i>)	Reservoir	N/A from the manufacturer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If patch becomes loose, rub the edges to smooth it down again.• If patch falls off, do not replace it until the usual nighttime application, rotating sites.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It is not known how long to delay showering or swimming after patch application.• It is not necessary to remove while bathing.

a. **Information from Canadian product monograph unless otherwise specified:** *BuTrans* (August 2020); *Climara* (June 2020); *Estradot* (August 2017); *Oesclim* (February 2017); *Sandoz Estradiol Derm* (March 2009); *Estalis* (August 2017); *Evra* (March 2020); *pms-Fentanyl MTX* (December 2020); *Sandoz Fentanyl Patch* (February 2020); *Teva-Fentanyl* (June 2019); *EMLA Patch* (August 2019); *Habitrol* (March 2005); *Nitro-Dur* (March 2019); *Mylan-Nitro Patch* (June 2019); *Transderm-Nitro* (August 2015); *Trinipatch* (January 2009); *Oxytrol* (March 2018); *Exelon Patch* (July 2016); *Mylan-Rivastigmine* (September 2016); rivastigmine patch (Strides Pharma Canada, January 2021); *Sandoz Rivastigmine Patch* (November 2016); *Neupro* (March 2021); *Androderm* (February 2018).

Users of this resource are cautioned to use their own professional judgment and consult any other necessary or appropriate sources prior to making clinical judgments based on the content of this document. Our editors have researched the information with input from experts, government agencies, and national organizations. Information and internet links in this article were current as of the date of publication.

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Cite this document as follows: Clinical Resource, Characteristics of Transdermal Patches. Pharmacist's Letter/Pharmacy Technician's Letter. August 2021. [370816]

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