

BUPRENORPHINE PATCH

DRUG NAME

Generic: Buprenorphine

Class of drug: Opioid

Brands in Australia: B-Patch, Bupredermal, Norspan (other generic brands available)

DOSAGE FORM

Available as a 5 mcg/hour, 10 mcg/hour, 15 mcg/hour, 20 mcg/hour, 25 mcg/hour, 30 mcg/hour or 40 mcg/hour patch. Quantity 2.

HOW IT WORKS

Opioids act on receptors in the central nervous system, reducing transmission of the pain impulse and modulating the pathways from the brain.

Used in pain management, especially for chronic or neuropathic pain, as directed by your doctor.

Starts working within 12-24 hours after the first patch. Full effect may take 2-3 days.

DOSAGE & FREQUENCY

Your doctor will advise on the starting dose and guide the dose changes.

Often titrated slowly (every week, only in exceptional circumstances less than that).

ROUTE OF ADMINISTRATION

Applied to intact, dry, hairless skin (upper arm, chest, upper back, or side of chest).

WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW WHILE TAKING THIS MEDICATION

- Do not cut the patch.
- Write the date and time of application on the patch with permanent marker, then apply to dry, non-irritated, hairless skin on upper torso. Wash hands after applying. Check the patch is still attached on the days between patch changes.
- Remove after 7 days and put a new patch on a different area (avoid re-using the same area for at least 3 weeks).
- When wearing the patch, do not allow it to come into contact with direct sources of heat such as electric blankets, heat pads, heat lamps, saunas or hot baths.
- Ensure you and/or your carer read and understand the Consumer Medicine Information and make sure you know how to dispose of patches safely.
- This medication may make you feel drowsy and may increase the effects of alcohol. If you are affected, do not drive or operate machinery. If you are very sleepy or have trouble staying awake, stop taking the medication and tell your doctor immediately.
- Be careful when you stand up as this medicine might make you feel dizzy if you stand up too quickly.
- *Chronic use:* look after your teeth and mouth, and get dental checks regularly, as opioids may make your mouth dry which increases risk of dental caries.

STORAGE INSTRUCTIONS

Store below 25°C in the original sealed pouch until use. Keep out of reach of children (even used patches still contain active drug).

DISPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

After removing the used patch, fold it over on itself so that the adhesive side of the patch sticks to itself, and dispose of it safely where children cannot reach it. Return unused or expired medication to your pharmacy for safe disposal.

MISSED DOSE INSTRUCTIONS

Ask your doctor or pharmacist.

EMERGENCY INSTRUCTIONS

Seek urgent medical help if you:

- Overdose (signs: severe drowsiness, slow breathing, pinpoint pupils, unconsciousness).
- Develop severe allergic reaction (rash, swelling, breathing problems).

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

- Constipation
- Nausea, vomiting
- Drowsiness, dizziness
- Headache
- Itchy or red skin at patch site
- Sweating

SERIOUS SIDE EFFECTS

- Slow or shallow breathing
- Severe drowsiness or confusion
- Irregular heartbeat
- Severe allergic reaction
- Mood changes, hallucinations

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES FOR SIDE EFFECTS

- Constipation: Use stool softeners, increase fibre and fluids.
- Skin irritation: Apply to a different site each week; use moisturiser after patch removal if needed.
- Nausea: Ask your doctor about anti-nausea medicines.
- Drowsiness: Avoid driving until you know your response.

OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Interactions:

- Dangerous with alcohol, sedatives, benzodiazepines (increased sedation, risk of overdose).
- May interact with antidepressants and other opioids.

Precautions:

- Use with caution in people with breathing problems, liver disease, or low blood pressure.
- Not usually recommended in pregnancy or breastfeeding.
- Do not suddenly stop — taper under medical advice.

Elective surgery advice

- Usually continued before surgery to prevent withdrawal.
- Your anaesthetist must be informed — buprenorphine can interfere with other opioids used during surgery.
- The surgical team may adjust your pain management plan postoperatively.

TITRATION DIARY

Date	Dose Taken	Side Effects	Notes (e.g., sleep, pain relief)