



poison prevention press

Poison Centers Save Money

A report prepared by the Lewin Group describing the value of poison centers was released on October 16, 2012. The report concluded that poison centers save:

- over \$1.8 billion each year in medical costs and lost productivity
- \$13.39 for every \$1 spent on poison center services
- \$47.1 million each year in family out of pocket costs by preventing unnecessary healthcare usage
- \$8.6 million each year in family out of pocket costs by reducing length of stay in the hospital

The full report can be viewed at www.aapcc.org.

Did you know that...

- The Maryland Poison Center has helped more than 2 million callers since it opened 40 years ago?
- The overall health care cost savings provided by the MPC since 1972 is \$439-\$878 million?

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“Skin Patch” Medicines: What You Need to Know

When we think of taking medicine, usually we think of swallowing a pill or liquid. However, some medicines can be taken by putting a patch on the skin. This will deliver the medicine into the bloodstream in small amounts over a period of time. Some pain relievers, nicotine, hormones and medicines used to treat chest pain and motion sickness are available in patches. While patches are convenient, care must be taken to prevent side effects, overdoses and unintentional exposures in children.

- Apply the patch to clean, dry, unbroken skin. If the skin is irritated or if there are cuts, too much drug could be absorbed.
- Make sure the patch is secure on the skin. It may take a bit of time to get the adhesive to stick firmly in place.
- Wash your hands after applying the patch to yourself or someone else.
- Use only one patch at a time unless the instructions or your doctor tell you otherwise. In most cases, most patches should be removed before a new one is applied.
- The patch may need to be removed during an MRI. Check with your doctor or x-ray technician prior to the test.
- To prevent skin irritation, place the patch on a different area each time. If skin irritation develops, notify your doctor.
- When you remove the patch, fold it over on itself so the adhesive edges stick together. Throw it away in a trash can that children and pets cannot get to.
- Gently wash the area with soap and water.

Patients using patches are at risk for overdose if the patch is broken or cut open; too much medicine will get on the skin and absorbed. Never cover the patch with adhesive tape or plastic wrap to keep it in place. This will also cause too much medicine to be absorbed. Wearing more patches than prescribed can cause side effects or overdose.

Children have been poisoned by skin patches in a number of ways:

- Sucking or chewing on patches they find in the trash can.
- Mistaking patches (used or new) for stickers and sticking them on their own skin.
- The patch is transferred from an adult holding the child or when the child rolls over on a skin patch that came off on the furniture or in an adult's bed.

If you suspect an overdose involving a patch, remove the patch and rinse the mouth out or wash the skin with soap and water right away. Then call the poison center at 1-800-222-1222. The pharmacist or nurse will give you more specific information based on your individual situation. It is important to call the poison center right away even if everything seems fine. Even after taking the patch off, some of the medicine still remains in the body.