



Scopolamine Patch

What it is and how to use it

This handout explains how to use a scopolamine patch. This patch is used to help prevent nausea and vomiting after having general anesthesia.

What is scopolamine?

Scopolamine is a medicine that prevents nausea and vomiting. It is often used to prevent the nausea and vomiting that can occur after having general anesthesia. Scopolamine makes the nerves that cause the vomiting reflex less active.

How to Use the Scopolamine Patch

Scopolamine comes as a round patch with 1 sticky side. It is placed on the skin behind the ear. It takes a few hours for the scopolamine to work, since it has to go through the skin. You may need to apply the patch the evening before surgery so that the medicine is working by the time your surgery is over.

If your provider tells you to use the patch before your surgery:

1. Apply the patch the evening before your surgery. **Wear only 1 patch at a time.** Do not cut the patch.
2. Choose a hairless area of skin behind 1 ear. Avoid placing the patch on any cuts or sore areas. Wipe the area with a clean, dry tissue.
3. Cut along the dotted line on the patch container and remove the patch.
4. Remove the clear plastic 6-sided backing from the patch. Try not to touch the sticky side of the patch with your hands.
5. Place the sticky (shiny) side of the patch on the skin behind your ear. The tan-colored side should be showing. **Make sure the patch sticks firmly to your skin, especially around the edge.**
6. Once you have placed the patch behind your ear, do not move it. It can stay in place up to 3 days.

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call the paging operator at **206-598-6190** if you have questions or concerns. Ask for the resident on call for your surgeon to be paged.

Important Precautions

- **After you have put the patch in place, be sure to wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water to remove any scopolamine from them.** If this drug comes into contact with your eyes, it could cause short-term blurry vision and *dilation* (widening) of your *pupils* (the dark circles in the center of your eyes). Unless you also have eye pain and the whites of your eyes get red, this is not serious. Your pupils should return to normal.
- **When you throw out a used patch,** it will still have active medicine in it. Follow these safety steps:
 - Fold the patch in half with the sticky side together.
 - Place it in a child-protected, covered trash can, out of the reach of children and pets.

Wearing the Patch After Surgery

- Keep the patch in place for at least 24 hours after surgery. At that time, if you do not have nausea, you may remove it and throw it away. If you still have nausea, you may keep the patch on for up to 3 days. Call your surgeon if your nausea lasts longer than 3 days.
- It is OK to swim or take a bath while you are wearing the patch, but it may fall off if it gets too wet. If the patch does fall off, throw it away (follow the precautions in the section above).

Side Effects

The most common side effects of the scopolamine patch are:

- Dry mouth
- Drowsiness
- Blurry vision or enlarged pupils (this usually occurs if you have scopolamine on your fingers and then touch your eye)

Very rarely, the patch may cause confusion, agitation, and mood or behavior changes. This is more common in the elderly.

Call your doctor if you have:

- Difficulty urinating (remove the patch)
- Pain and reddening of your eyes, with enlarged pupils (remove the patch)
- Skin rash
- Change in your heart rate or rhythm
- **Severe** constipation

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