

Patch Fact Sheet

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SOURCES:

Office on Women's Health

- ❖ [Girlshealth.gov: Types of Birth Control](#)
- ❖ [Birth Control Methods: Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- ❖ [Unintended Pregnancy Prevention: Contraception](#)

Food and Drug Administration

- ❖ [Birth Control Guide](#)

How do I get it?

You need a prescription. The patch can be purchased at pharmacies and clinics. The patch is sold under the brand name Ortho Evra. To search for a family planning clinic near you, go to <http://www.opaclearinghouse.org/search/>.



What is the patch?

The patch is a thin plastic square that contains the same hormones (progestin and estrogen) found in most birth control pills. Hormones are chemicals that control how different parts of your body work. The patch has a sticky side that can be attached to the skin of the stomach, buttocks, or the outside of the upper arm. The patch can also go on the front or back of the upper body like the shoulder blade or chest area (but not on the breasts).

The hormones in the patch are absorbed through the skin and prevent pregnancy by keeping the ovaries from releasing eggs. The patch also works by causing the cervical mucus to thicken, which blocks sperm from meeting and fertilizing an egg.



How do I use it?

You put a new patch on each week for three weeks (take off the old patch and throw it away). During the fourth week, you do not wear a patch and your period will probably start. After the fourth week, start over again and put on a new patch (even if there is still some bleeding from your period).

- ❖ To help you remember, try to put a new patch on the same day each week
- ❖ Put the patch on clean, dry skin and press to make sure it will stay on. Be careful not to touch the sticky side while putting it on your skin
- ❖ Look each day to make sure the patch is still in place
- ❖ It is okay to bathe and swim while wearing a patch

Discuss your medical history with your health care provider before using the patch and let them know if you develop any side effects.



How do I get it?

You do not need a prescription to buy female condoms. You can find female condoms at drug stores, family planning clinics, and many grocery stores. To search for a family planning clinic near you visit <http://www.opaclearinghouse.org/search/>.



How effective is it?

Of 100 women who use this method each year, about five are likely to get pregnant.

The risk of pregnancy is much less for women who use the patch correctly (putting it on the skin the same time each week). The patch may be less effective in women who weigh more than 198 pounds. It may also not work as well for women who take certain medicines or the supplement St. John's Wort.

Talk with your health care provider if you have any questions about using the patch.



Advantages of the patch

- ❖ The patch is easy to use and does not require the consent of the female's partner
- ❖ The patch is safe and works well in preventing pregnancy. Using the patch means you do not have to think about birth control when you want to have sex
- ❖ Your periods may be lighter when using the patch
- ❖ The patch may offer benefits that include fewer menstrual cramps, less acne, and stronger bones. It can also reduce the risk of developing non-cancerous breast tumors and some cancers that affect reproductive organs



Drawbacks of the patch

- ❖ Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- ❖ Requires a clinic visit and prescription
- ❖ Certain antibiotics and supplements (such as St. John's Wort) may make the birth control patch less effective
- ❖ It may take a month or two after stopping the patch before normal periods return



- ❖ Some women experience skin irritation where the patch is worn. Others may have breast tenderness



Quick Facts

Effectiveness in Preventing Pregnancy

- ❖ Of 100 women who use this method each year, about five are likely to get pregnant
- ❖ The risk is smaller in women who use the patch correctly (and apply it to the skin at the right time)

Use

- ❖ You put on a new patch and take off the old patch once a week for three weeks
- ❖ During the fourth week, you do not wear a patch and your period will probably begin

STI Protection

- ❖ No

Clinic Visit Required

- ❖ Yes, prescriptions are required to purchase the patch

