

All about the Birth Control Patch

The Birth Control Patch is a small patch that you put on your skin once a week to keep from getting pregnant.

The patch has two kinds of hormones like the ones made in a woman's body. These hormones are taken in through the skin. They keep the woman's eggs from leaving her ovaries.

How does the Patch work?

The woman puts a new patch on her skin once a week. Each patch lasts for 7 days. The woman takes the old patch off and puts a new patch on a different part of her body. She does this for 3 weeks in a row.

That way the hormones stay at the level needed to keep her from getting pregnant.

How well does it work?

Only about 1 to 8 women out of 100 who use the patch for a year get pregnant.

The patch may not work as well for women who weigh more than 200 pounds. Ask your Family PACT provider for advice.

How do I get the Patch?

You must go to a health care provider. You should tell your provider about:

- ◆ Any health problems you may have.
- ◆ Any medicine you may be taking.

Your Family PACT provider can help you decide if the patch is right for you.

What do women like about using it?

- ◆ It does not interrupt having sex.
- ◆ It is easy to use.
- ◆ The patch stays on in the shower, bath, with exercise, even with swimming.

What do some women dislike?

- ◆ You must remember to change the patch every week.
- ◆ It may leave stickiness on the skin that you can take off with baby oil.

How do I use the Patch?

Start using your patch the day your health care provider suggests. For example, put it on the Sunday after you start your period.

During the first week you start using the patch, use another method, like condoms, every time you have sex. This will help protect you while your body gets used to the hormones.

The patch works best if the level of hormones stays the same in your body. Change your patch the same day each week. Ask your Family PACT provider to show you how to put the patch on.

Week 1:

- ◆ Be sure your skin is clean and dry.
- ◆ Put the patch on with care.
- ◆ Press down on the patch for 10 seconds.
- ◆ Make sure the edges of the patch are sticking firmly.
- ◆ Keep the patch on for 7 days.

Week 2 and Week 3:

- ◆ After 7 days, take the patch off. Fold it in half and throw it in a trashcan.
- ◆ Put a new patch on a different part of your body.
- ◆ Change it on the same day of the week each week.

Week 4:

- ◆ Take the patch off. Do not put a new patch on.
- ◆ You will get your period.
- ◆ Wait 7 days. Then start again with Week 1.

Make the Patch work for you.

Put each patch on a different part of your body.

- ◆ You can put it on your hips, upper arms, back or shoulders.
- ◆ Do not use it on your breasts or under arms.

If your patch comes off part way, press it firmly in place for 10 seconds. If it sticks well, keep wearing it. If not, change it.

If you forget or are late with your patch, put a new patch on right away.

- ◆ Use another method, like condoms, for 7 days.
- ◆ Ask about using Emergency Contraceptive Pills.

What about the side effects?

Some side effects of the patch are:

- ◆ Changes in your period, or spotting and bleeding between periods
- ◆ Nausea or breast tenderness
- ◆ Mood or sex drive changes
- ◆ Skin rash or redness where the patch is placed.

If any of these side effects bother you, talk to your Family PACT provider.

The Patch may not be safe for some women.

Talk to your Family PACT provider about any health problems you may have. For example:

- ◆ If you are over 35 years old and smoke.
- ◆ If you have had blood clots or a stroke.
- ◆ If you have high blood pressure or diabetes.

Ask if the patch is safe for you to use.

Watch for these warning signs.

With the patch, you may get a higher dose of hormones than you would with the pill. **Tell your Family PACT provider right away if you have:**

- ◆ Sudden headaches.
- ◆ Eye problems (blurry vision)
- ◆ Sharp, sudden pain in the leg, chest, or abdomen.

Smokers have an even higher chance of having health problems.

**The Birth Control Patch
does not protect you from HIV
(the virus that causes AIDS)
and other diseases people get from
having sex.**

Use condoms (for men or women)
along with the Patch
to protect yourself from these diseases.