

Ortho Evra is a hormonal method of birth control which is also called the Patch.

It looks similar to a band-aid but it's square. It has the same ingredients as the birth control pill; but they are delivered into your body through the skin instead of by mouth. For some women this is a good, effective option because unlike the pill, you don't have to remember to take a pill at the same time every day. You simply put on a patch the same day of the week for three weeks. Then there is a fourth week that is patch free.

How Does The Patch Work?

The patch prevents pregnancy in the same way the pill does: it prevents eggs from being released (ovulation).

How Well Does The Patch Work?

Ortho Evra is 99% effective if used properly, which is similar to the effectiveness of the pill. The patch *may be* less effective if you are over 175 lbs. It *is* less effective if you are over 198 lbs. is less effective. If you are heavier than this weight, you may want to consider other birth control methods.

What Are the Advantages to the Patch?

The advantages often include:

- ↪ Less acne (pimples)
- ↪ Periods that are shorter, lighter and more regular. You may have less cramping.
- ↪ There is nothing to put in place before sex. You only have to remember to change the patch once a week.
- ↪ Discreet. You can place the patch many different places.
- ↪ Less risk of ovarian and endometrial cancers, pelvic inflammatory disease, non-cancerous breast tumors and ovarian cysts.
- ↪ Less iron deficiency anemia (a lack of iron in the blood).

What are the Disadvantages to the Patch?

There are possible side effects. Most are mild and go away within 3 months. Call us with any concerns.

Possible unwanted side effects include:

- ↪ Spotting between periods.
- ↪ Nausea.
- ↪ Breast tenderness.
- ↪ Mood swings.
- ↪ May worsen menstrual cramps.
- ↪ Skin irritation where the patch is placed.
- ↪ The patch offers NO protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV. Condoms (male or female condoms) are the only methods that help protect against STIs.



What About Serious Side Effects?

Serious side effects are rare, but if you have any of the side effects listed below **call the Annex or an E.R. immediately. The North Memorial E.R number is (763) 520-5200.**

A: Abdominal pain.

C: Chest pain (severe), cough, shortness of breath.

H: Headache (unusual or severe), dizziness, weakness, numbness.

E: Eye problems (vision loss or blurring).

S: Severe pain in your legs.

DON'T SMOKE! We strongly recommend that you don't smoke, especially if you are on the patch. Smoking increases your chances of serious side effects.

How Can I Get the Birth Control Patch?

You need an exam, which includes reviewing your health history, a pelvic exam, a pap smear (a test for cervical cancer), and sometimes a pregnancy test. At the Annex we also test for some STIs. Some places don't test for STIs unless you ask.



Frequently Asked Questions

Will the Patch Make Me Fat?

There is no research that supports that there is weight gain on the patch. Often women start the patch around the time they naturally gain weight. Let your clinic know if you are having any unwanted side effects.

Will the Patch Give me Zits?

Generally, no! It will probably help get rid of acne. If you have trouble with increased acne or any other skin problems after you have been on the patch for 3 months, contact The Annex.

What if I Don't Like the Side Effects?

Because there is only one kind of patch now, you will probably have to change to a different method of birth control. Again, for the first three months after starting the patch you may have temporary side effects. Stick with the patch and often they will go away.

Can I get Pregnant After Being on the Patch?

Yes, in fact discontinuing the patch can make you extra fertile for a while, but occasionally it can take you a little bit longer to get pregnant.

How Does the Patch Stay On? Can I Swim, Exercise or Apply Lotion?

The patch sticks to your skin like a strong band-aid. You should put it onto clean, dry skin that is free of lotions and make up. Avoid putting lotions or make up onto the patch. Also, don't decorate your patch or cut it, it may not work as well. The Patch should stay put during exercise, swimming, in a sauna or whirlpool and while showering.

Using the Patch:

To apply: Carefully remove the backing and put it onto clean skin. Hold your hand firmly over the patch for 10 seconds.

To remove: Just pull it off quickly. Use baby oil to remove any remaining adhesive or marks. Fold the patch over and throw it away.

Rotate the patch site: If you put your patch on the same site each week, your skin will become red and irritated.

Apply a new patch on the same day each week for 3 weeks. The fourth week will be a patch-free week when you should get your period. Call us if you miss your period for 2 months.

There are 4 ways to start or re-start patches:

Any day you want: Start the first patch on any day you choose. The benefit is that you won't have to wait until your period starts. The negative is that for 9 days you can't have sex or must use a backup method of birth control. You might spot (bleed between periods) in the first month of patches. This should go away after a few cycles.

Any Sunday you want: Start the first patch on any Sunday you choose. The benefits and negatives are the same as above, *and* you probably won't get your period on the weekend.

The first Sunday after your period: Wait until your period starts, then apply the first patch on the following Sunday. If your period starts on Sunday, start that day. The benefit of this is that you are less likely to have spotting the first month of patches and starting on Sunday means that you probably won't have your period on the weekend. The negative is that for the first 9 days you can't have sex or you must use a backup method.

The first day of your period: Apply your first patch on the day that your period starts. The benefit is that the patch is effective immediately and you don't need to use a backup method of birth control. You are also less likely to have spotting during the first few months of patches. The negative is that you have to wait for your

period to start, and this could be a long time, especially if your periods are irregular, and you may get your period on weekends.

What If I Forget to Change The Patch?

If you forget to re-start the patch after your patch-free week: Put on a new patch as soon as you remember. This will be your new "Patch Change Day." Apply a new patch on the same day each week for 3 weeks. Use a backup method of birth control for the first 9 days if you missed changing your patch by more than 1 day.

If you forget to change your patch week 2 or 3:
Less than 48 hours late: Put on a new patch as soon as you remember. Keep your original "Patch Change Day." No back-up needed.

More than 48 hours late: Put on a new patch as soon as you remember. This is your new "Patch Change Day" and start a whole new 4 week cycle. Use a back-up method of birth control for 9 days.

You may have spotting (bleeding between periods) if you start late. This is not harmful.

What if the patch becomes loose or falls off?

☞ If it happens within a day of putting on a new patch, and the patch still sticks well, try to reattach it by pressing it back down and holding your hand firmly over it for 10 seconds.

☞ If it's been more than a day since application, if it doesn't re-stick well, or if it has stuck to itself or something else, apply a new patch; this is your new "Patch Change Day" and start a whole new cycle. Apply a new patch on the same day each week for 3 more weeks. Use back-up for 9 days.

☞ Don't tape the patch down, as it won't deliver the medicine well. You can buy individual patches if you need them.

THE BIRTH CONTROL PATCH

Also known as

ORTHO EVRA



4915 42nd Avenue North
Robbinsdale, MN 55422
763-533-1316
www.annexteenclinic.org