

Whole Woman's Health of Austin
Transforming Healthcare One Woman at a Time
8401 North IH 35 Suite 200 * Austin TX 78753
(512) 250 – 1005 * (800) 282 – 1005

ORTHO EVRA PATCH—“The Patch”

What is it?

Ortho Evra is patch that administers hormones through the skin to prevent pregnancy. It is applied (like a band-aid) to the skin weekly for three weeks of every month.

How does it work?

Like the pill, the patch relies on two hormones, estrogen and progesterone, to prevent pregnancy. The hormones are released at a consistent level through the skin and are absorbed into the bloodstream. The hormones prevent pregnancy by preventing a woman's ovaries from releasing eggs (ovulation). They also thicken the cervical mucus, which keeps sperm from joining with an egg.

How do I use it? How do I get it?

Our doctor or clinician will do an exam, review your medical history, and write you a prescription for the patch. Each prescription comes with three patches. Apply the patch to your buttock, abdomen, upper torso (not on the breasts), or upper outer arm. You should start the patch when directed by your clinician, and change the patch one week later. Continue wearing patches for three weeks. On the fourth week of a month have a “patch free” week. Most women get their period during this week.

If a patch peels up partially or comes off completely, try to reapply your patch or put on a new patch within 24 hours. Single replacement patches are available at the pharmacy. If it has been off for more than 24 hours, put on a new patch and start a new four week cycle. You will need to use a back-up method like condoms for this first week of the new cycle. If you forget to change your patch, contact Whole Woman's Health. There should never be a “patch-free” period of more than seven days (you may be at risk for pregnancy).

What are the advantages?

The patch is as safe and effective as the pill, and does not interrupt sex. It is immediately reversible. Many women prefer the patch over the pill because they do not have to remember to take a pill every day.

Taking hormonal contraceptives can provide some additional benefits other than contraceptive ones. These include less painful menstruation, acne reduction, fewer pelvic infections, and decreased risks of endometrial and ovarian cancer.

What are the disadvantages? What are the possible side effects?

Most side effects of the patch are not serious. The most common side effects are skin irritation (where the patch is applied), nausea, vomiting, bleeding between menstrual periods, weight gain, breast tenderness, and difficulty wearing contact lenses. These side effects, especially nausea, and vomiting, may subside within the first three months of use.

The serious side effects of the patch occur very infrequently, especially if you are in good health and do not smoke. However, you should know that certain medical conditions have been associated with or made worse by hormonal contraception, including blood clots, stroke, and heart attacks. Notify Whole Woman's Health if you notice any unusual physical disturbances while using the patch.

How effective is it?

The patch is more than 99% effective.

***Remember, only a latex condom or polyurethane condom can protect you from HIV infection and other sexually transmitted diseases.

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Who cannot use this method?

For the majority of women, the patch can be used safely. But there are some women who are at high risk of developing certain serious diseases that can be life-threatening or may cause temporary or permanent disability or death. The risks associated with taking oral contraceptives increase significantly if you:

- Smoke
- Have high blood pressure, diabetes, or high cholesterol
- Have or have had clotting disorders, heart attack, stroke, agina pectoris, cancer of the breast or sex organs, jaundice, or malignant or benign liver tumors
- You should not use the patch if you suspect you are pregnant.

Applying the Ortho Evra Patch



1. Open the foil pouch by tearing it along the top edge and one side edge. Peel the foil pouch apart and open it flat.
2. The Patch is covered by a layer of clear plastic. Remove the Patch **and** the plastic together from the foil pouch.
3. Using your fingernail, lift one corner of the Patch and peel it **and** the plastic off the foil liner. Sometimes patches can stick to the inside of the pouch—be careful not to accidentally remove the clear liner as you remove the Patch.
4. Peel away half of the clear plastic. (Avoid touching the sticky surface of the Patch with your fingers.)
5. Apply the sticky side of the Patch to clean and dry skin, then remove the other half of the clear plastic.
6. Press firmly on the Patch with the palm of your hand for 10 seconds, making sure the edges stick well. Run your fingers around the edge of the Patch to make sure it is sticking properly.

Check your patch every day to make sure all edges are sticking.

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