

## The Patch – Ortho Evra

### How:

The birth control patch has two hormones that enter your body through your skin. It prevents pregnancy by stopping the release of an egg and it makes fluids around the cervix thicker. When you stop using the patch, you could get pregnant right away. It is smaller than the size of a condom wrapper. You can wear the patch on your buttocks, stomach, torso (front or back, but not your breasts) or upper outer arm.

### When:

Use the patch on a 4 week cycle. Put on a new patch each week on the same day of the week for 3 weeks. During the 4<sup>th</sup> week you do not wear a patch. Your menstrual period should start during the 4<sup>th</sup> week.

### Where:

You can get a prescription for the patch from your healthcare provider.

### Advantages:

The patch works as well as birth control pills to prevent pregnancy and is easier to use than the pill. It is small, thin and smooth and can be worn under your clothes. You only have to change the patch once a week. It sticks to your skin in warm, humid weather and when you shower, bathe, swim or exercise. Your periods may be lighter and less painful. The patch may clear up acne.



### Disadvantages:

A small number of women have skin irritation where the patch is placed. There is a slight chance that it may not work as well for women who weigh 198 pounds or more. You need to put it on the right way so it sticks to your skin. The patch doesn't protect you against HIV/STDs.

### Side effects:

Some women have sore breasts, headaches, nausea or cramps using the patch. Most women have no major side effects. The patch releases more estrogen than birth control pills so some women may have more side effects with the patch.

### Risks:

You should not use the patch if you are pregnant or:

- Have breast cancer now.
- Have ever had a heart attack, stroke, a blood clot or clotting problems.
- Have certain liver diseases or liver tumors.

- Have a certain kind of migraine headache.
- Have high blood pressure.
- Have some heart conditions.
- Smoke 15 or more cigarettes a day and are 35 years old or older.
- Have ever had a complex organ transplant.



### **Effectiveness:**

0.4 out of 100 women will get pregnant each year if they always use the patch the right way.

Nine out of 100 women will get pregnant each year if they don't always use the patch the right way.