

## Woman's Health Options

### Evra (The Patch)

#### *What Is The Patch?*

- The Patch contains hormones similar to the natural hormones in a woman's body (estrogen and progestin). These are the hormones also used in the Pill. The hormones in the Patch stop the release of an egg from the ovaries. No egg means pregnancy cannot occur.

#### *Does It Work?*

- The Patch is 99% effective with perfect use. This means that in a year of perfect use, 1 in every 100 women gets pregnant using the Patch.
- **The Patch is 92% effective with typical use.** This means that in a year, 8 in every 100 women get pregnant using the Patch.

#### *How Is It Used?*

- The Patch is worn for 1 week at a time and is replaced on the same day of the week for 3 weeks in a row. (For example, if you start your Patch on a Monday then Monday will always be the day you change your Patch. This is your **Patch Change Day**). During the fourth week you will not wear anything. This is when you will get your period.
- The Patch should be started during the first five days of a period or within the first five days after an abortion.
- **You are not protected from pregnancy during the first month of using the Patch.** You will need to use back up contraception such as condoms and spermicide during this time.
- The Patch can be applied to four different areas of your body: your buttock, abdomen, upper torso (excluding the breast) or the upper outer arm.
- You should apply the Patch to clean dry and non-irritated skin. Avoid the use of lotions, sunscreen or makeup in the area you will be applying the Patch. When applying press firmly on the Patch with the palm of your hand and hold for 10 seconds. Make sure the edges stick well. Check your Patch every day to make sure all the edges are sticking. You can apply the Patch to the same part of your body every week or different parts, depending on your preference.
- The Patch is made of material that keeps it on the skin for the entire week. You can swim, bath and shower while using the Patch. If the Patch does appear to be loose or if it falls off, **change it immediately**.
- If it has fallen off for a period of less than 24 hours no back up birth control is needed.
- If you are not sure how long it has been loose or removed, you may now become pregnant. Put on a new Patch as soon as you notice and start a new 4-week cycle. You now have a new Patch Change Day. Use back up birth control such as condoms and spermicide for the rest of that month.

### ***What if I forget to change my Patch?***

At the start of any Patch Cycle (Week 1, Day 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you forget to start your Patch after your seven-day break, apply the Patch as soon as you remember.</li><li>• You now have a new Patch Change Day- you will always apply your Patch on this new day.</li><li>• Because you can ovulate if you are even one day late when putting your Patch on, use back up contraception such as condoms and spermicide for the rest of that month.</li></ul>
In the middle of the Patch Cycle (Week 2 or 3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you notice within the first day of your Patch Change Day that you have forgotten to change your Patch, change it as soon as you remember. Change your next Patch when you normally would. No back up birth control is needed.</li><li>• If you are two or more days late in changing your Patch, you could become pregnant. You must now start a new 4-week cycle. Do this by changing your Patch. Continue with your Patch as if you have just begun a new package. Change your next Patch on your new Patch Change Day.</li><li>• For example: if you are supposed to change your Patch on a Wednesday and it is now Friday, put a new Patch on and from now on your Patch Change Day will be Friday.</li><li>• Use back up birth control such as condoms and spermicide for the rest of that month.</li></ul>
At the end of the Patch Cycle (Week 4).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you forget to remove it during the week you are supposed to get your period, take it off as soon as you remember. Start the new package on the normal Patch Change Day. You do not need to use back up contraception.</li></ul>

### ***What Are The Advantages?***

- Unlike the Pill, you do not have to remember to take it every day.
- Convenient; it does not interrupt sex.
- It may help lessen menstrual cramps.
- It makes periods more regular and lighter.
- It lowers the chance of some kinds of cancer.

### ***How Will I Feel On The Patch?***

- You will probably feel the same.
- Your period may be lighter or shorter.
- You might have breast tenderness for the first 3months; this usually goes away after this period of time.
- There is a chance of:
  - nausea (upset stomach)
  - mild headaches
  - mood swings

weight gain of 1 to 2 kilograms (3-5 pounds)

**If you experience these side effects for a prolonged period of time, talk to your doctor; the Patch may not be right for you.**

***Things To Think About:***

- You do not need to take a “break” from the Patch. If you are sexually active, you should have a yearly check up and Pap test to check for cervical cancer.
- In clinical trials it has been shown that the Patch may not work as well for women who weigh more than 200 lbs.
- Some women should not take the Patch, especially those with high blood pressure, liver disease, severe headaches, breast cancer and/or circulation problems. Check with your doctor.
- Severe side effects and risks are very rare. Watch for these Patch Danger Signs:
  - Abdominal pain (severe)
  - Chest Pain (severe), cough, shortness of breath
  - Headache (severe), dizziness, weakness and numbness
  - Eye Problems (vision loss or blurring), speech problems
  - Severe leg pain (calf or thigh)If you experience any of these, remove your Patch and call your doctor or clinic right away.
- Risks increase in your 30’s especially if you smoke. Women who are over 35 and smoke should not use the Patch.
- Due to the potential risk of increased estrogen exposure from the patch, do not expose the patch area to heat sources such as saunas or whirlpool baths.

***Sexual Decision Making:***

- You have the right to choose to have or not have sexual intercourse.
- If you choose to have sex you may want to think about the risk of sexually transmitted disease (STD’s). The Patch does not protect against STD’s, including HIV/AIDS. One of the best ways to protect yourself is to use a condom when having sexual intercourse.
- It can be helpful to talk to your partner about these choices before you have sex.

***Medications and The Patch:***

Some medications can interfere with the Patch. A list is given on the back of this page. If you are uncertain about whether a medication will interfere with the Patch, ask a pharmacist or use a condom until you get your period.

***For More Information Call:***

The Birth Control Centre	735-0010
Options Sexual Health Association	423-3737
Woman’s Health Options	484-1124
STD Clinic	413-5156

Evra information line: 1-866-848-EVRA (3872) or check out the web site at [www.evra.ca](http://www.evra.ca). (If you contact them they can send you a text message on your cell phone reminding you when to change your Patch.)

**THE FOLLOWING MEDICATIONS MAY INTERFERE WITH YOUR  
EVRA PATCH:**

**Seizure Medications**

Phenobarbital, Luminal, Carbanazebine, Tegertol, Esthosuximide, Zarotin, Phenytoin, Dilantin, Pimidone, Mysoline

**Sleeping Pills**

Barbituates, Secobaritol, Seconal, Tuinal, Pentobarbital, Nembutal, Anobarbital, Amytal, Chlorahydrate, Equanal, Miltown

**Antibiotics**

Ampicillin, Ampicin, Penbritten, Penicillin, Bicillin, Crystapen, Griseofulvin, Chloramphenicol, Metronidazole, Flagyl, Neomycin, Neo-Medrol, Neo-Decadron, Nitrofurantoin, Sulfonamides, Gantanol, Sulfadits, Dragenan, Novosoxizoli, Tetracycline, Rifampicin

**To Prevent Swelling**

Phenylbutazone, Butazoloidine, Phenbuff

**Antihistamines, Cold or Allergy Pills/Liquid**

Benadryl, Insommol, Atarax, Chlortripolon, Actified, Antistine, Claritin, Contact C, Cold FX, Corsym, Dimetane, Dimetapp, Drixoral, Hismanal, Histaspan, Ornade, Multipax, Optime, Pancetyl, Periactin, Phenesgen, Seldane, Sinutab, Tavist, Trinalin, Umicon, Neocitron, Reactin

**Herbal Remedies**

Anything that speeds up your metabolism may affect the absorption of the Evra Patch for example: Hydroxycut, Xendrine, Ephedrine.

**Also:**

Antimigrane products, Vitamin E

***Always check with your doctor, pharmacist, or herbalist when taking a medication in addition to the Patch. If you are ever unsure of the effect of another medication, use a back-up method of contraception.***

