



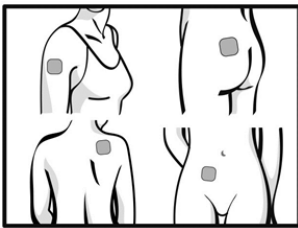
The Patch



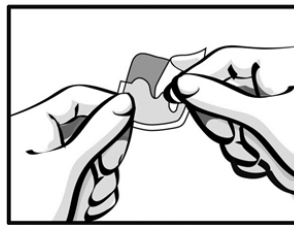
The Contraceptive Patch is a safe and effective way to prevent pregnancy, but it doesn't protect you against STIs. Use a condom along with the patch to protect yourself and your partner(s).

How does the patch work?

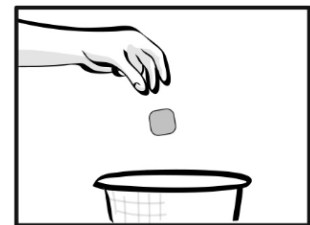
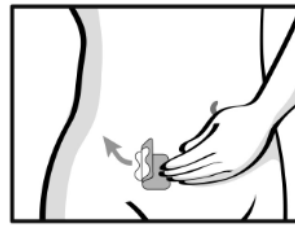
The patch is a small beige square that sticks to the skin and slowly releases two types of hormones (estrogen and progestin), preventing pregnancy. It's very sticky and can be worn in the shower, swimming or exercising. You'll have to remember to change your patch every three weeks, but there is nothing to remember every day.



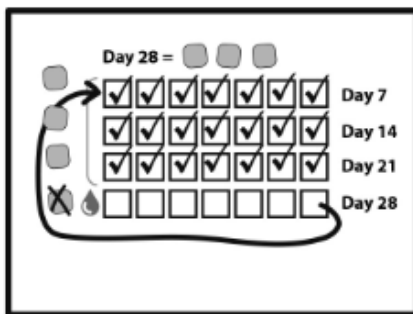
You can stick the patch on your stomach, back, buttock, shoulder or upper arm.



Peel off half the clear cover. Clean and dry your skin (no lotion) before sticking on your patch. Stick the patch to your skin, removing the rest of the clear cover. Leave the patch in place for one week.



After one week, throw the used patch away.



Stick on a new patch each week for three weeks in a row, changing your patch on the same day each week. Most people get their period in their patch-free week. After your patch-free week, stick on a new patch.



Some brands of the patch can be used continuously to avoid or delay your period (you simply stick on a new patch each week with no patch-free week). Check with your health care provider before you try.

As long as you use it correctly, the patch will prevent pregnancy for the entire month (even during the fourth week). Store your new patches sealed in their package, at room temperature, and out of direct sunlight.



The patch is highly effective and reversible (not permanent).

It prevents pregnancy by:

- Preventing your ovaries from releasing an egg (pregnancy can't happen if the egg and sperm don't meet).
- Changing the lining of your uterus (endometrium), making it harder for a fertilized egg to implant.
- Changing your cervical mucus, making it harder for sperm to get to the egg.

How do I get started using the patch?

You can start using the contraceptive patch at any time. Depending on which day in your menstrual cycle you start, it can take up to 7 days before the patch is effective in preventing pregnancy.

You'll need to use condoms until the patch has been in place long enough to prevent pregnancy.



Sticking to a schedule keeps the right level of hormones in your body to prevent pregnancy.

The patch is most effective when you remove the old patch and stick a new patch to your skin on time. It can be 99.7% effective when used perfectly, but most people aren't perfect. With typical use the patch is about

91% Effective

Meaning 90 out of 1000 people using the patch typically will get pregnant in a year.



Effectiveness of the patch can be reduced by certain medications. If you're unsure about a possible interaction between your medications, talk with your health care provider.

The patch may be less effective for people with a high BMI (Body Mass Index). If you're concerned about how the patch will work in your body, ask your health care provider.

What if the patch falls off or I forget to stick a new one on time?

The patch works best when you change it on time each week. Forgetting to change the patch on time is the most common reason the contraception patch fails, resulting in an unplanned pregnancy.

If your patch falls off or was applied late in week 1

If your patch was off for less than 24 hours: Stick your patch back on right away. If the patch won't re-stick, use a new patch, then change the patch on your regular patch change day. You're still protected from pregnancy.

If your patch was off for more than 24 hours: Apply a NEW patch right away. Keep the same patch change day and continue with your cycle of three patches. Use condoms for the next 7 days until the patch has been in place long enough to prevent pregnancy. Emergency Contraception (EC) is a good option to prevent pregnancy if you had sex without a condom in the last five days.

If your patch falls off or was applied late in week 2 or 3

If your patch was off for less than 24 hours: Stick your patch back on right away. If the patch won't re-stick, use a new patch, then change the patch on your regular patch change day. You're still protected from pregnancy.

If your patch was off for 24 to 72 hours: Apply a NEW patch right away. Keep the same patch change day and continue with your cycle of three patches. At week 4, begin a new contraception cycle with a new patch right away. Skip your patch-free week (you may miss your period or have spotting). You're still protected from pregnancy.

If your patch was off for more than 72 hours: Apply a NEW patch right away. Keep the same patch change day and continue with your cycle of three patches. At week 4, begin a new contraception cycle with a new patch right away. Skip your patch-free week (you may miss your period or have spotting). Use condoms for the next 7 days until the patch has been in place long enough to prevent pregnancy. Emergency Contraception (EC) is a good option to prevent pregnancy if you had sex without a condom in the last five days.

If you wore your week 1 or week 2 patch longer than scheduled

If you wore your patch for 7-8 days (one day too long): Apply a new patch right away. Keep the same patch change day and continue with your cycle of three patches. You're still protected from pregnancy.

If you wore your patch for 9-11 days (2-4 days too long): Apply a NEW patch right away. Keep the same patch change day and continue with your cycle of three patches. At week 4, begin a new contraception cycle with a new patch right away. Skip your patch-free week (you may miss your period or have spotting). You're still protected from pregnancy.

If you wore your patch for 12 days or longer (5 days or more too long): Apply a NEW patch right away. Keep the same patch change day and continue with your cycle of three patches. At week 4, begin a new contraception cycle with a new patch right away. Skip your patch-free week (you may miss your period or have spotting). Use condoms for the next 7 days until the patch has been in place long enough to prevent pregnancy. Emergency Contraception (EC) is a good option to prevent pregnancy if you had sex without a condom in the last five days.

If you wore your week 3 patch longer than scheduled

If you wore your patch for more than 7 days, but less than 14 days: Apply a new patch right away. Keep the same patch change day and continue with your cycle of three patches. Skip your patch-free week (you may miss your period or have spotting). You're still protected from pregnancy.

If you wore your patch for more than 14 days: Apply a new patch right away. Keep the same patch change day and continue with your cycle of three patches. Use condoms for the next 7 days until the patch has been in place long enough to prevent pregnancy. Emergency Contraception (EC) is a good option to prevent pregnancy if you had sex without a condom in the last five days.

If there is a possibility you may have become pregnant, you should take a pregnancy test before applying a new patch to begin a new cycle. If you aren't sure what to do, ask your health care provider or visit www.sexlifesask.ca for more information.

Are there side effects from the patch?

Some side effects from the patch are more desirable than others. Many of the less desirable ones often get better after you have been using the patch for a few months. Side effects can include: more regular periods, less menstrual flow and cramping, reduced risk of endometrial, ovarian, and cervical cancer, reduced risk of fibroids and ovarian cysts, irregular bleeding, headaches, nausea, breast tenderness, skin irritation.

Some side effects can be warning signs of something more serious. If you have any of the following symptoms, let your health care provider know as soon as possible: a new lump in your breast, severe headache, soreness in your leg, severe chest or stomach pain, missing a period if you have always been regular, yellow eyes.

Who should NOT use the contraceptive patch?

The contraceptive patch is safe for most people. Some health conditions can increase the risk of serious side effects. Check with your health care provider before using the contraceptive patch if you are a smoker over 35 years old or have existing health conditions.

IS THE PATCH RIGHT FOR YOU?

It's important that your contraception method is right for you. If you're having trouble remembering to change the patch on time or you're struggling with side effects, there are lots of other great contraception options that might be a better fit for you.

Pills



IUD



Ring



Injection



To find out more about contraception or other areas of your sexual health, explore ...

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