

Contraceptive Patch

What is the contraceptive patch?

The contraceptive patch is worn on the skin to prevent pregnancy. It slowly releases hormones (estrogen and progestin) through the skin daily. It works on a 28-day (four-week) cycle. Each patch is worn for one week at a time and is replaced on the same day of the week for three consecutive weeks. On the fourth week no patch is worn.

How it works

The patch works the same way as the birth control pill:

- It stops your ovaries from releasing an egg each month.
- It makes the mucus in the cervix thicker, making it harder for the sperm to travel into the cervix (the opening to the uterus).
- It makes the lining of the uterus thinner, making it harder for a fertilized egg to attach.

Effectiveness

The contraceptive patch is 99 per cent effective with perfect use. In other words, of 100 women who use the patch, approximately one woman will get pregnant in one year.

The contraceptive patch may not work as effectively if you are taking certain medications such as antibiotics or seizure medication. Always check with the pharmacist or your health care provider if you are taking other medications. You should use an additional method of birth control such as condoms

during these times and for one week after you finish your medication.

Advantages

- Once-a-week contraceptive routine.
- Decreased menstrual cramps.
- Lighter, shorter, more regular periods.

Disadvantages

In the first three months, you may experience spotting or bleeding between periods, headaches, breast tenderness, and nausea. Other disadvantages include:

- Possible skin irritation at the application site
- Patch may detach from the skin (less than two per cent)
- Less effective in women greater than 90 kilograms or 198 pounds



1-800-361-5653
TTY: **1-866-252-9933**

York Region Health Connection

Community and Health Services

Public Health

www.york.ca



Instructions for use

1. Apply the first patch during the first 24 hours of your menstrual period. This will be your patch change day. Apply a new patch on the same day of the week for the next two weeks.
- On the fourth week, do not apply a patch. Your period should start during this patch-free week.

Following week four, repeat the cycle of three weekly applications followed by a patch-free week.

2. You should only wear one patch at a time.
For example, if your period starts on a Sunday, apply the first patch on that Sunday. You would change your patch on the Sunday following two Sundays and then have a patch-free week.
3. Check periodically that the patch is stuck firmly to the skin.
4. Avoid using any creams, lotions or oils near or at the patch site.
5. Avoid using hot tubs and saunas.
6. Read the instructions that come with the contraceptive patch and check the expiry date on the package before you use them.

If the patch detaches or you are late in applying your patch, read your instruction booklet or call York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653 for instructions.

The patch should not be used by women:

- Who cannot take estrogen
- Who are breastfeeding
- Who are over the age of 35 and smoke

Possible side-effects

A very small number of women may experience serious problems such as a blood clot. You have an increased risk of these problems if you are a smoker, have high-blood pressure or are over 40 years of age.

Early warning signs

- Abdominal pain (severe)
- Chest pain (severe), shortness of breath
- Headaches (severe), dizziness, weakness, numbness
- Eye problems (vision loss or blurring), speech problems
- Severe leg pain (calf or thigh)

If you experience any of the above, call 911 or go to nearest emergency department and tell them you are using the contraceptive patch.

The contraceptive patch does not protect you from sexually transmitted infections. Always use a condom from beginning to end of all sexual contact to reduce your risk.



1-800-361-5653
TTY: 1-866-252-9933

York Region Health Connection

Community and Health Services

Public Health

www.york.ca

