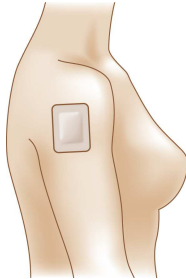


## EVRA The Contraceptive Patch

### What is it?

Evra is a beige non-latex patch, about 4 cm square, containing the hormones estrogen and progesterone. The hormones are slowly absorbed through the skin into the bloodstream. The patch is put on the buttock, outside of the upper arm, abdomen or upper body (not on the breasts). You need a prescription from a health care professional.



### How does the patch work?

The patch works the same way as birth control pills. Hormones in the patch stop an egg from being released each month (ovulation) and thicken the mucous in the cervix which makes it harder for sperm to enter the uterus.

The patch is effective immediately from the first day of bleeding. When used correctly, the patch is 99% effective in preventing pregnancy. The patch may be less effective for women who weigh over 90kg (198 lbs).

### How do you use the patch?

The box has 3 patches. To start the patch for the first time:

- Week 1 - put a patch on your skin the first day of your period and leave it on for one week. This day (example Monday) is now your patch change day.
- Week 2 – replace this patch with a new patch, on a different part of your body, on the same day of the week
- Week 3 - replace this patch with a new patch, on a different part of your body, on the same day of the week
- Week 4 - no patch is used and your period should start during this “patch-free” week

At the beginning of your next 4 week cycle, then start over, applying the first patch from a new package on your normal patch change day, no matter when your period begins or ends.

If you want to start your patch on a day other than the first day of your period, you must use a back up method of birth control, such as condoms, for the next 7 days.

- Put the patch on a different place (buttock, abdomen, upper body, upper arm) each week. You can wear it on the same body part but not in the exact same spot.
- Do not put it on cut, red or irritated skin.
- Do not put it where oil, creams, lotions or powders are applied.
- Press the patch firmly with the palm of your hand for 10 seconds to be sure edges stick well.
- The patch will stay attached and be effective while bathing, swimming, and exercising or when the weather is very humid.
- Do not expose the patch area to sources of heat such as saunas, hot tubs, heat lamps, heating pads, etc.
- Fold used patches in half and put them in the garbage. Do not flush patches down the toilet.

Read and follow the instructions that come with the patch package.

If you have made any mistakes using the patch, you may be able to take the emergency contraceptive pill (morning after pill) to help prevent pregnancy.

### Are there side effects?

Some women may experience:

- nausea
- headache
- breast tenderness
- break-through bleeding or spotting
- changes in weight (weight gain, bloating due to water retention, weight loss)
- skin irritation

### If you use the patch, you should not smoke.

Although rare, women who use the patch and smoke have a higher chance of developing a blood clot however it is extremely rare. Signs of a blood clot include:

- severe abdominal or chest pain
- severe cough or shortness of breath
- severe headache
- dizziness
- eye problems such as vision loss or blurring
- speech problems such as slurring
- severe leg pain in calf or thigh
- weakness or numbness, especially if one sided

If you have any of these signs, remove the patch and go to a hospital right away.

### Things to Remember:

- √ Check your patch every few days to make sure it is still in place.
- √ Keep some extra patches in case you need to replace one if it falls off or becomes loose. Remember to take extra ones on your vacation.
- √ Store patches at room temperature.
- √ Do not write on the patch or change it in any way.
- √ Do not move the patch once it is applied.
- √ It may be easier to remove the patch while bathing.
- √ If switching from Depo-Provera to Evra, start the patch on the day the next injection is due.
- √ If changing from birth control pills or the ring to Evra, start the patch the first day of your bleeding, *not* on the pill start day.

### Forgot to Apply or Change your Patch?

#### During Week 1

1. Apply a patch as soon as you remember (this is now your new patch change day)
2. Use a back-up method for 7 days as you may become pregnant.

#### During Week 2 or 3

If less than 2 days (48 hours) from usual change day:

1. Remove your “old” patch
  2. Apply a new patch immediately
  3. Apply your next patch on your usual day
- No back-up needed

If more than 2 days (48 hours) from usual change day:

1. Remove your “old” patch
2. Apply a new patch immediately (this is now your new patch change day and you now start a new 4 week cycle). You may or may not have a period this cycle.
3. Use back-up for 7 days
4. Apply next patch in 7 days

#### During Week 4 (patch-free week)

1. Remove patch when you remember. Your period may start late.
  2. Apply a new patch on usual patch change day
- No back-up method needed

You should never have the patch off for more than 7 days

### When Should I Use Back Up?

You should use a back up method, such as condoms, for 7 days if you:

- start the patch on any day other than the first day of your period
- start the patch more than 24 hours after your period starts
- are late starting your patch again (greater than 7 days with no patch)
- change from the pill/ring to the patch and it is not the first day of your period
- switch from Depo-Provera injection to the patch and you are more than the 13th week from your last injection
- take prescribed or over-the-counter medications, street drugs or herbal remedies/supplements. Check with your health care provider

### What if the Patch Becomes Loose, Starts to Peel Off or Falls Off?

If it is loose or off for **less** than 1 day (24 hours),

- try to restick the patch **or** put a new patch on immediately
- no back-up is needed
- your patch change day stays the same

If it is loose or off for **more** than 1 day or you are not sure for how long,

- put a new patch on immediately-this starts a new 4 week cycle
- you now have a new “patch change day”
- use back-up method for next 7 days as you may become pregnant

Use condoms every time to help prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STI), HIV and hepatitis B.  
Condoms are free at Healthy Sexuality Clinics.

**For more information call Peel Public Health  
905-799-7700**

**and ask for Sexual Health Information  
or visit**

**intheknowpeel.ca  
peelregion.ca**

**peelsexualhealth.ca  
sexualityandu.ca**