

## The Patch – Ortho Evra

### What is Ortho Evra?

Ortho Evra “the patch” is a thin, beige, flexible square patch, which is applied to the skin once per week to prevent pregnancy. It contains forms of the hormones estrogen and progesterone (these are similar to hormones produced naturally by the ovaries and found in oral contraceptives). The hormones are released over a 1 week period. These hormones prevent ovulation, or the release of eggs. If there is no egg to meet the sperm, pregnancy cannot occur. In addition, the hormones have a reversible effect on cervical mucous and the uterine lining, which also discourages pregnancy.

### How do I start the patch?

- **First Day Start** – Apply the patch during the first 24 hours of your menstrual period. This will be your patch change day. Change your patch every 7 days (for example, if you apply your patch on Tuesday, then change your patch the following Tuesday)
- **Sunday Start** – Apply the patch the first Sunday after the first day of your menstrual period. Change the patch every Sunday. A backup method is recommended for the first 7 days.
- **Quick Start** – Start patch on any day that you are reasonably sure you are not pregnant. That will be your “patch change” day. You will need to use a backup method for 7 days.

### Instructions for use:

- The patch may be applied to the buttocks, abdomen, upper back, or on the outer upper arms. Do not apply the patch to your breasts. Always apply the patch to a clean, dry, non-infected or irritated skin surface.
- After 3 weeks of use (ie, the first day of week 4), the patch should be removed for 1 week to allow for withdrawal bleeding (period)
- After 1 week without the patch, you should begin a new patch cycle of 3 weeks on, 1 week off.
- The patch cannot be used as a continuous method, you must take a week off with every 4 week cycle.

### Problems with use:

1. If the patch falls off or peels off – Reapply the patch by pressing and holding it in place with your palm until the patch adheres to the skin’s surface. Make sure the edges have a good seal. If the patch will not stick, then remove it and apply a new patch within 24 hours. Change the patch on the scheduled change day.
2. If the patch falls off or is not secure for 24 hours – Use a new patch, start a new 4 week patch cycle. Use a backup method for 7 days.
3. If you forget to change your patch during week 2 or 3, replace the old patch as soon as you remember and then change it on your next regularly scheduled change day. **Warning:** If your patch is on more than 8 days, you are no longer protected (after day 8 you are no longer protected. Replace the old patch and start a new 4 week cycle, use a backup for 7 days).
4. If you forget to change your patch during week 4 – Take off the patch as soon as you remember. Start a new 4 week cycle on the scheduled patch change day.

**Note:** Research shows that the patch is not as effective at preventing pregnancy for a person who weighs 198 pounds (90kgs ) or more.

## Temporary Minor Discomforts

Some people experience a variety of minor discomforts when starting combined contraceptives, including the patch. Some of these symptoms may be nausea, breakthrough bleeding, breast enlargement or tenderness, mood changes, and changes in libido. Most of these symptoms will disappear within the first three months of using the patch. Acne, although often improved in the long term, may worsen for a couple of months when you first start the patch. Other patch problems may include skin irritation.

## WARNINGS

The patch contains synthetic forms of estrogen and progesterone. All birth control methods that contain these hormones raise a person's risk of having a blood clot. A blood clot can occur in your head, heart, legs or lungs. This is a very serious potential risk of hormonal contraception. When you think about the risk of a clot, remember that the patch is keeping you from getting pregnant. The risk of getting a blood clot is significantly higher for people who are pregnant or recently gave birth.

### Serious Adverse symptoms/ACHES

- A – abdominal pain, severe
- C – chest pain, shortness of breath, coughing up blood
- H – headaches, severe
- E – eye problems, vision loss/blurred
- S – severe leg/calf pain or swelling

If you experience any of these symptoms then seek medical attention and remember to mention you are using hormonal contraception.

For complete information about this contraceptive, read your package insert.  
For more information or if you have more questions, talk to one of our nurses.

Nurse Advice Line is (831) 459-2951

**Hormonal contraception does not protect you from sexually transmitted infections. You must still use a condom, practice safer sex and get regular STI testing to reduce your risk of an STI and identify problems early.**