

Ortho Evra Contraceptive Patch

- *What Is The Contraceptive Patch?*
 - The Ortho Evra transdermal contraceptive system or *patch* contains both **estrogen** and **progesterin**. It is a weekly hormonal **birth control method**, that is applied to the skin with a new patch each week for a total of 21 days followed by a “patch free week”.

- *What Does The Patch Look Like?*
 - The patch is roughly 2 inches by 2 inches and consists of 3 layers:
 - An outer flesh colored protective polyester layer
 - A medicated adhesive middle layer
 - A clear polyester liner sheet which is removed prior to application

- *Where Can A Woman Wear The Patch?*
 - The patch is applied to one of four sites:
 - Buttock
 - Lower abdomen
 - Upper outer arm
 - Upper torso (front or back but *not* your breasts)
 - Once the patch has been adhered the woman may shower, bathe, swim and use a hot tub.
 - It is thin, smooth and beige.
 - When replacing an old patch with a new one, the woman should not stick the new patch to the same place on the skin. This is to help prevent skin irritation or rash.

- *How Does It Work?*
 - The **contraceptive patch** works very much like **oral contraceptive pills**. It contains the same **hormones** (**estrogen** and **progesterin**) found in commonly used **birth control pills** and releases these **hormones** at the same daily rate as the pill.
 - Wearing the patch keeps a woman from **ovulating**, which means she does not release an egg that could be **fertilized** by a man’s **sperm**. The patch also thickens a woman’s **cervical mucus**, which makes it harder for sperm to enter the **womb**.
 - The patch prevents **ovulation**, the release of an egg from the ovary. The patch contains **hormones** that are released through the skin and into the bloodstream.

- *How Effective Is The Patch?*
 - The patch is not recommended for women weighing over 198 pounds. Due to the greater possibility of pregnancy. The patch has been noted in studies by the FDA (Food and Drug Administration) to have a decreased effectiveness due to weight.

- *How Is The Patch Used?*
 - The patch is used on a weekly 28 day cycle, similar to birth control pills. Each box contains three patches. A patch is worn for a 7 day period, then removed and replaced with a new patch. Every new patch should be applied on the same day of the week.
 - After using three patches in a row, no patch is worn during the fourth week. A “*patch free week*” induces withdrawal bleeding the onset of your monthly menstrual cycle.
 - After the “*patch free week*”, the woman begins using a new box of patches.

Month

	S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1st Patch	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2nd Patch	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
3rd Patch	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
No Patch	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	29	30	31				

- *Does The Patch Protect Me Against Sexually Transmitted Diseases/ Infections or HIV/AIDS?*
 - No! The patch does not protect a woman from **STD's** or **HIV/AIDS**. Woman who want to protect their health and future, should use **condoms** along with the pill. Using **condoms** will lessen the chance of getting **cervical cancer**, a possible result of having contracted the **HPV** virus from **sexual intercourse**.

- *Will The Patch Fall Off If I Swim, Bathe or Sweat?*
 - Probably not, the adhesive is designed to stay put even when under water. In clinical studies, only a small number of patches (5%) became partially or fully detached. A woman should be careful not to apply creams or oils (such as suntan lotion) under or near the patch, as this can make it more likely to fall off.

- *What Happens If A Patch Becomes Loose or Falls Off?*
 - The woman should try to reattach it. If the detached patch is no longer sticky, the woman should replace it with a new patch. This new patch should be worn until the next "change patch day", then replaced.
 - If the patch was off the skin for more than 24 hours, however, the woman should begin a new cycle of patches and may need to use another form of contraception (such as a condom) for the first week of this new cycle. Speak to your **Nurse** at **Okanogan Family Planning** for more information.

- *What Are The Side Effects?*
 - The side effects of the patch are similar to those of **oral contraceptive pills**. During the first cycle of use, about one in five women may experience spotting or breakthrough bleeding between **menstrual periods**. This effect decreases after the first several cycles. Other side effects reported by women in clinical studies included headache nausea, application site reactions (rash or irritation) and breast discomfort.

- *How Do I Know If The Patch Is Right For Me?*
 - The patch is an effective **contraceptive** that can be used safely by most women. The patch does not protect against sexually transmitted disease/infections or the virus that causes acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Women at risk of STD's should also use a **female condom** or male latex **condom** to prevent disease. Your **Nurse** at **Okanogan Family Planning** can give you more information and help you decide if the patch is right for you.