

The patch

The hormonal patch has 2 hormones (estrogen and progestin) that enter your body through your skin. It prevents pregnancy by stopping the release of an egg. It also thickens cervical mucus (liquid at the uterine opening) to stop sperm from reaching the egg.

Effectiveness

- Less than 1 person (0.4) out of 100 people will get pregnant each year if they always use the patch the right way.
- About 9 out of 100 people will get pregnant each year if they don't always use the patch the right way.

Advantages

- The patch works as well as the pill and is easier to use.
- It's small, thin, smooth, and can be worn under your clothes.
- You only have to change the patch once a week.
- It sticks to your skin in warm, humid weather and when you shower, swim, bathe, or exercise.
- Your periods may be lighter and less painful.
- The patch may clear up acne.
- You can start using the patch at any time during your cycle, as long as you are not pregnant.

Disadvantages

- A small number of people may have skin irritation where the patch is placed.
- Does not protect against STDs/HIV.
- There is a slight chance the patch may not work as well for people who weigh 198 pounds or more.

People who are 18 or older may receive their patch at a participating pharmacy. Long-acting reversible contraceptives, such as IUDs or the implant, are 99% effective at preventing pregnancy. These birth control methods can prevent pregnancy for up to 10 years. Talk to your provider or pharmacist to decide if one of these methods may be right for you. Routine medical care and health screenings are important for early detection and prevention of health issues.

The patch may be worn on your lower belly, upper arm, shoulder, or bottom.

Put a new patch on the skin once a week ("patch change day") for 3 weeks in a row. Do not wear a hormonal patch during the 4th week.

You may not have any side effects from the patch.

However, people may experience:

- Sore breasts
- Cramps
- Headache
- Mood changes or depression
- Nausea

The patch has more estrogen than the pill, so some people may have more side effects.

You should not use the patch if you are pregnant, or:

- Have breast cancer right now.
- Have ever had a heart attack, stroke, blood clot, or clotting problems.
- Have liver disease or liver tumors.
- Have migraine headaches with aura.
- Have high blood pressure.
- Have heart disease.
- Smoke 15 or more cigarettes a day and are 35 or older.
- Have ever had a complex organ transplant.