

What to know when using the patch as birth control?



It takes 7 days for the patch to be effective in preventing pregnancy. Be sure to use a second method of birth control such as condoms during that time.



The patch stops being effective for birth control at 198 pounds.



The patch does not prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Use condoms and get tested at least once a year.



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PEDIATRIC AND ADOLESCENT GYNECOLOGY

The Patch

The patch is one treatment option for problematic periods. It can help manage heavy, irregular or painful bleeding and prevent acne. The patch is a small, adhesive sticker that releases medicine into the blood stream, and you replace it once every week. The medicine in the patch keeps the lining of the uterus thin and blocks ovulation. For many, the patch is easier to use than taking a pill every day.

How do I get started on the patch?

- Start your patch as soon as you get it from the pharmacy. Write down your start date in a calendar or diary.
- Set a reminder to remember to change the patch on the same day each week.
- Each box has 3 patches in it and each patch comes in a foil package. Store extra patches in a cool, dry place. Avoid extreme temperatures.



Set a reminder on your cellphone to change the patch on the same day each week.

How do I apply the patch?

- The patch should be applied to one of these places:
 - Stomach
 - Back
 - Upper arm
 - Hips
 - Shoulder
- Do not put the patch on your breasts.
- Make sure your skin is clean and dry. Take a shower or use an alcohol wipe to clean the area. Do not use lotion or cream before applying the patch. Avoid skin that is broken or irritated and areas that may be rubbed by tight clothing, such as a waistband or bra strap.
- When ready to use, carefully open the foil package, pull out the patch and peel off the clear backing. Find the spot you want to apply it, and press firmly for 10 seconds.
- It's OK to get help with putting on the patch, especially if it's new or a place that is hard to reach.

The patch will stick to your skin even when you work out, shower or swim (if swimming for more than 1 hour, the patch may come off).

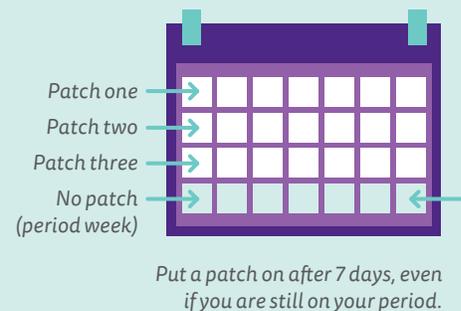
How do I take the patch off?

- Wear each patch for 7 days. Take the old patch off and put a new one on. This should be done on the same day each week.
- If the area is sticky, you can use an alcohol wipe or baby oil to clean the area.
- After taking the patch off, fold it in half and throw it away in the trash.
- Put the new patch on a different area of skin that is clean and dry.

How can I use the patch to have a period?

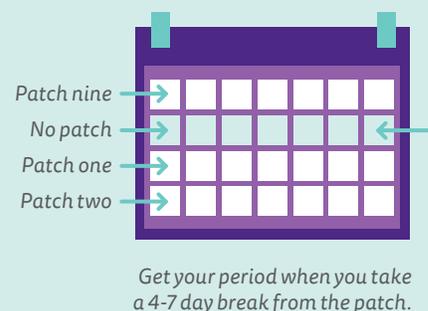
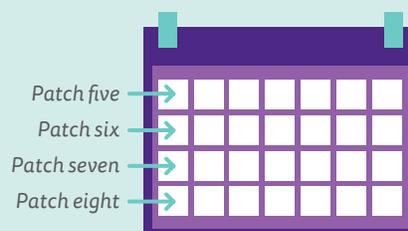
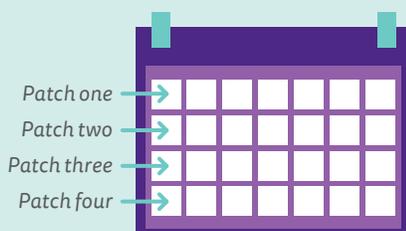
Having a period every month:

- A common way to have a period every month is to wear a new patch every week for 3 weeks, go without a patch for 1 week, then start again.



Having a period every 3 months:

- Some people like to use the patch in **extended** or **continuous** dosing. Extended and continuous use are safe to do when using the patch because the lining of the uterus stays thin.
 - **Extended** use is when you wear the patch for 9-12 weeks in a row and take 4-7 days off to have a period.
 - **Continuous** dosing is when you put on a new patch each week, and only take it off for 4-7 days when you have breakthrough bleeding.



What are the possible side effects from the patch?

Most people who use the patch have no side effects. Talk to your doctor if you are having trouble with any of these symptoms, have questions or if they last longer than 2 weeks.

- You may have some mild stomach aches, mild headaches and breast tenderness during the first week.
- Some people will have redness from the glue on the patch. This will go away in a few days. Let your doctor know if this reaction gets worse.
- The patch shouldn't cause weight gain or depression.
- The patch can slightly increase the risk of blood clots (called a venous thrombosis or deep venous thrombosis). **People with a history of or risk factors for blood clots shouldn't use the combined pill, patch and ring, and instead use progestin-only treatments to help with periods or for contraception.**

What if the patch falls off?

- If the patch falls off, put a new one on right away. Call your pharmacy if you need a refill.
- Do not wait more than 7 days to change the patch.

What if I forget to change the patch?

- The patch has 8 days of medicine in it.
- **1-7 days late:** If you are 1-7 days late changing the patch, you don't have to do anything differently. Change your patch as soon as you remember.
- **More than 7 days:** Put on a new patch right away and call our clinic. The patch won't be an effective form of birth control if you leave it off for more than 7 days.

How can I get a refill?

- Call your pharmacy 2 weeks before you need a refill so you don't run out of patches.
- You should be able to get a 3-month supply each time. If you can't get a 3-month supply at your pharmacy, ask if they offer a mail-order option or call your insurance company for other options.
- Some insurance companies may require you to pay a co-pay when picking up your medicine. Contact your insurance company to see if you have to pay anything up front.
- If you are having any problems getting or using the patch, call or message our office.

Learn more



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