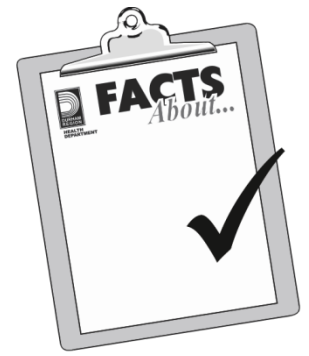




FACTS

About...



HEALTH DEPARTMENT



Transdermal Patch

What is it?

The transdermal patch, also called “the patch”, is a method of birth control containing the hormones estrogen and progestin. These hormones are absorbed slowly through the skin. They stop the ovaries from releasing eggs, change the lining of the uterus to prevent implantation and thicken the vaginal mucous to prevent pregnancy. A patch is applied every week for three weeks, followed by one week with no patch; the week with no patch is the week in which a woman can expect to have her period. The patch is placed on one of four sites; the buttocks, lower belly, upper outer arm, or upper body, but never right on the breast. It is recommended that the site the patch is placed on be rotated each time.

How effective is it?

The patch is between 91% and 99.7% effective for birth control when used correctly.

What are the side effects?

Headache, irregular bleeding, nausea and breast soreness are experienced by some women. Most side effects will go away in the first few months. Local reactions where the patch is placed on the skin may occur.

What are the risks?

The patch may increase the risk for stroke, heart attack or blood clots. Women over the age of 35 who smoke or have high blood pressure have a higher risk.

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For more information

Durham Region Health Department

905-666-6241 1-800-841-2729 durham.ca

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



What are the benefits?

The benefits of the patch may include: preventing pregnancy, more regular periods with less bleeding and cramping, and a decrease risk of ovarian and endometrial cancer. Use of the patch does not require daily care.

What are the limitations?

A prescription is needed in order to obtain the transdermal patch. For women who weigh 90 kg (198 lbs.) or more, the patch is less effective. The patch is not recommended for women with a history of blood clots, stroke or heart disease, those with high blood pressure, severe migraines, breast cancer, endometrial cancer, liver disease or tumours.

What are the effects on breastfeeding?

Estrogen may reduce breast milk supply. It is recommended that breastfeeding mothers use progestin only types of birth control. If you are currently breastfeeding and would like to discuss birth control options, please talk to your health care provider.

What you should know...

The patch sticks well and you can continue to swim and shower. The patch should not be exposed to sources of heat such as heating pads, saunas, hot tubs, sunbathing. The patch-free interval should never be more than seven days. If a patch is applied late or a patch falls off, refer to the product instructions. The patch **does not** prevent the transmission of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) including HIV/AIDS; therefore, condoms should always be used during sexual activity.

Contact your health care provider immediately if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- sudden and severe chest pain/heaviness
- sudden and severe abdominal pain
- leg pain
- trouble breathing/shortness of breath
- severe headaches or visual problems

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