

Contraception Patch

Starting your method

If you apply your patch on the first day of your period you will be protected immediately.

If you start at any other time you will need to use condoms too for 7 days.

Ways of using your patch

There are now several choices about how to use your patch:

- Standard use 21 days: Apply your patch for 21 days replacing it every 7 days, then have a 7-day break when you are likely to have a withdrawal bleed then restart on day 8. Do not leave your patch on for more than 7 days.
- Tailored use (Shortened hormone-free interval): Apply your patch for 3 weeks replacing it every 7 days, then have a 4-day break when you may have a withdrawal bleed then restart on day 5.
- Extended use (tricycling) 9 weeks: Apply your patch for 9 weeks replacing it every 7 days then take a 4- or 7-day break, restarting on the 5th or 8th day.
- Flexible extended use: Apply your patch weekly for at least 3 weeks. If breakthrough bleeding occurs for at least 3 days, then have 4 patch free days and restart on the 5th day.
- Continuous use: Use your patch every week without a break. Breakthrough bleeding may occur but usually settles.

Patch placement

Apply to clean, dry, non-hairy skin (not on breasts) and rotate your patch location.

Falling off patch or forgetting to remove your patch.

Less than 48hours

If the patch has fallen off reapply as soon as possible, If it is no longer sticky apply a new patch.

If you have forgotten to remove it take off the old patch and put a new one on. Change your patch on your normal patch day.

48hours or more

Apply a new patch as soon as possible and start a new patch cycle using condoms for 7 days. If you have had sex without a condom in the previous 5 days you may need emergency contraception.

Late removal of patch 3

Take patch off as soon as you remember and start the next patch cycle on your normal day. You will have a shorter number of patch free days.



Forgetting to restart patch

If you restart the patch more than 48 hours after your usual start day, use extra contraception for 7 days. If you have had sex without a condom in the previous 5 days you may need emergency contraception.

Use of other medicines

Some medicines can stop the patch from working.

These include:

- some medication that treats TB or fungal infections
- medication for HIV
- medication for epilepsy
- St John's Wort

If you're taking any of these medicines, you'll need additional contraception. You may wish to change your form of contraception that isn't affected by your medication.

Always tell your doctor you're using the contraceptive patch if you're prescribed any medicine.

Side effects of the patch

The combined method may cause temporary side effects. These are usually mild and settle within 3 months of starting.

Risks of using the patch

There are some risks of using the combined patch method, but these are not common.

Seek URGENT medical attention if you experience any of the following rare symptoms which could indicate that you have a blood clot.

- Painful swelling on one or both legs
- Severe chest or stomach pain
- Breathlessness or coughing with blood
- A bad fainting episode or collapse
- Unusual headaches
- Difficulty with sight or speech
- More severe migraine attacks than is usual for you
- Numbness, weakness or pins and needles of a limb.

Combined hormonal contraception may slightly increase the risk of cervical cancer and breast cancer. This risk decreases when the patch is stopped. However, there is a protective effect for bowel, ovarian and endometrial cancer.

For more information, please contact Sexual Health West Sussex on 01903 285199 or visit our website on

www.sexualhealthwestsussex.nhs.uk