

Northeast Iowa Community Action Corporation
Family Planning Program
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ORTHO EVRA CONTRACEPTIVE PATCH

What is it?

EVRA is a contraceptive patch that contains estrogen and progesterone (like birth control pills). This system uses a 28-day (four week) cycle. A new patch is applied each week for three weeks (21 total days). Week Four is patch-free. Bleeding is expected during this time. Most women start their bleeding within five days of the drug-free week.

How does it work?

After applying the first patch, you need to use condoms or another form of birth control for one week. A steady flow of drugs is released throughout the month that primarily prevents ovulation.

How do I use the EVRA patch?

- A) If you are starting EVRA for the first time, apply the EVRA patch on the first Sunday after you get your menstrual period. You must use back-up contraception for the first week.
- B) The patch should be applied to clean, dry, intact healthy skin on the buttock, abdomen, upper outer arm or upper torso, in a place where it won't be rubbed by tight clothing. It should NOT be placed on skin that is red, irritated or cut, and should NOT be placed on the breasts.
- C) Replace the patch the next Sunday with a new patch. Remove the patch and apply a new one immediately. The used patch still contains some active hormones—it should be carefully folded in half so that it sticks to itself before throwing it away. Patch changes may occur at any time on the Change Day. The patch should be applied to a new spot on the skin to help avoid irritation, although they may be kept within the same anatomic area.
- D) Wear patches for three weeks. The fourth week is patch-free. You should never have a patch off for more than 7 days in a row.

What are the side effects of EVRA?

The most common adverse events reported by 9 to 22% of women using EVRA in clinical trials were the following, in order of decreasing incidence: breast symptoms, headache, application site reaction, nausea, upper respiratory infection, menstrual cramps, and abdominal pain.

Patch Adhesion

Studies indicate that approximately 1.9% of patches needed to be replaced because they fell off and approximately 2.9% became partially detached. If the EVRA patch becomes partially or completely detached and remains detached, insufficient drug delivery occurs. A patch should not be re-applied if it is no longer sticky, if it has become stuck to itself or another surface, if it has other material stuck to it, or if it has become loose or fallen off before. If a patch cannot be reapplied, a new patch should be applied immediately. Other adhesives such as tape or wraps should NOT be used to hold the EVRA patch in place. If a patch is partially or completely detached for more than one day (24 hours or more) or IF YOU ARE NOT SURE HOW LONG THE PATCH HAS BEEN DETACHED, YOU MAY NOT BE PROTECTED FROM PREGNANCY. You need to apply a new patch immediately and use a back-up contraceptive method for the first week.

The EVRA patch is somewhat less effective in patients who weigh 198 lbs. or more.

The EVRA patch does not protect against sexually transmitted diseases.

When starting to use the EVRA patch, you need to return to the clinic to have your blood pressure checked within approximately 3 months.

FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions)

Who Should NOT Use EVRA?

Persons who have a current or past history of blood clots in their legs or lungs; women who are pregnant or suspect they are pregnant; those who have severe high blood pressure; diabetes, migraine headaches, breast cancer; undiagnosed vaginal bleeding, liver disease, and women who are 35 years or older who smoke. If you weigh 198 lbs or more, the EVRA patch is less effective.

How effective is the EVRA patch in pregnancy prevention?

Correct and consistent use of the EVRA patch by patients is approximately 88.7%. (This is defined as 21 consecutive days of drug followed by a 7-day drug-free period.) When used correctly, the effectiveness of the EVRA patch is 99%.

What if I am taking other medications, such as antibiotics?

Other medications often make the EVRA patch somewhat less effective. When taking other medications, it is wise to use a back-up method of contraception, such as condoms to enhance effectiveness.

I am taking oral birth control pills now but I want to switch to the EVRA patch. What do I do?

Apply the EVRA patch on the SUNDAY after the first day of your period. You should use a back-up contraception, such as condoms for the first seven days. If you do not get your period within FIVE days of taking your last active birth control pill, talk to your health care provider. They will provide instructions for you.

Sometimes the EVRA patch sticks to the inside of the foil pouch. What do I do?

Use your fingernail to lift one corner of the patch and peel the patch AND the plastic liner off the foil liner. Be careful not to accidentally remove the clear liner as you remove the patch.

I just had a baby. Can I use the EVRA patch?

If you are breastfeeding, you should not use the EVRA patch while you are breastfeeding. If you are NOT breastfeeding you should not start using the EVRA patch until 4 weeks after delivery.

I like to use a tanning bed and get a total body tan. Can I remove the patch while I tan?

Ortho EVRA may not be a good choice of contraception for you. The patch should not be removed. If it is removed, it will probably not stick again and you will then need to use a new patch.

I have had the flu recently, with vomiting and diarrhea. Will the effectiveness of the EVRA patch be less?

No, the amount of drug you get from the patch should not be affected.

Can I bathe, shower, swim, and exercise with the EVRA patch?

Yes, experience with more than 70,000 patches worn by over 3300 women demonstrated a low replacement rate due to detachment or partial detachment of the patch.

Call us at 563-382-8436 or 866-742-3226 or your doctor right away if you have any of the WARNING signs listed below:

- A** Abdominal pain (severe)
- C** Chest Pain or shortness of breath
- H** Headaches (Severe)
- E** Eye problems (blurring, loss of vision, flashing lights)
- S** Severe leg pain or swelling (calf or thigh)

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