Birth Control Patch

The birth control patch is a simple, safe and effective way to prevent pregnancy. The patch is a thin, beige piece of plastic that looks like a square Band-Aid, less than two inches across. The patch is placed on certain parts of your body, once a week. It uses hormones to prevent ovulation and thicken your cervical mucus lining. Once you stop using the patch, you will return to fertility—the patch has no effect on your ability to get pregnant in the future.

While taking the patch, many women feel about the same. Your period should become very predictable, coming in the week where you do not wear a patch. If you have bleeding at other times of the month, continue using the patch as usual. Over time, your periods will be lighter, shorter, and less painful. The patch also lowers your risk of getting cancer of the uterus and ovaries. In the first two to three months of use, some women experience nausea, bleeding between periods, weight change, and/or breast tenderness or swelling. These problems often go away after those first few months. If they do not, reach out to your medical provider to find a birth control method that is right for you.

The patch does not protect against the spread of STIs, so condoms are still recommended. If you stop using the patch and have unprotected sex, take Emergency Contraception (EC) right away. EC can prevent pregnancy up to five days after unprotected sex. The sooner you take it, the better it works.

How do I use the patch?
- You can put the patch on your butt, stomach, upper outer arm, or upper torso. Never place the patch on your breasts, your genitals, or soles of your feet and hands.
- Place a new patch on once a week—wearing each new patch 7 days at a time, for three weeks in a row. You will not wear a patch the fourth week.
- You will start a new box of patches at the end of the fourth week.
- You can shower, swim, and do all normal activities with the patch on your body.

How do I start the patch?
- There are two ways to start the patch:
  - Quick Start: Place the first patch on your body as soon as you get the pack.
  - Next period: Place the first patch on your body within the first 5 days of your next period.
- If you place the patch up to 5 days after the start of your period, you are protected against pregnancy right away. If more than 5 days, use condoms as back-up for the first 7 days.

What if the patch comes off?
- If the patch comes off, put it back on right away. If it does not stick, use a new patch.
- If the patch falls off for more than a day, put on a new patch and use condoms for the next 7 days.
- Put on your next patch a week from the date of this new patch.

What if I forget to change the patch after 7 days?
- The patch has enough hormones for 9 days. If you leave the patch on for 9 days or less, just put on a new patch.
- If you leave the patch on for more than 9 days, put on a new patch and use condoms for the next 7 days.
- No method of birth control is 100% effective. If you correctly use the patch, it is up to 99% effective. If you miss or delay some patches, effectiveness decreases to 91-94%.

Call your health care provider if you experience these RARE symptoms:
- Leg pain, swelling, and redness
- Weakness or numbness on one side of your body
- Bad headache
- Vision problems
- Chest pain and/or unusual shortness of breath

Insurance Information: The patch is covered at no out of pocket expense for students enrolled in an NYU sponsored student health insurance plan. For all other plans, please consult with your insurance carrier.

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