

# ABCD Family Planning

## How to Use Contraceptive Patch

### **Decide with your health care provider when to start the patch.**

Many women start the patch during the first 5 days after their menstrual period begins. You do not need to wait until you stop bleeding. You will need special instructions from your health care provider to begin using the patch any other time. If you start the patch at any time other than the first 5 days of your menstrual bleeding, you will need to use a condom or not have sex until the patch has been on your skin for seven days in a row.

- Be sure to ask your health care provider for any special instructions if you are switching to the patch from any other type of birth control, if you are starting the patch after having a baby, or after an abortion or miscarriage.

### **How do I use the patch?**

- You wear each patch on your skin for 7 days.
- After 7 days you put on a new patch.
- After you wear patches for 3 weeks in a row, you have 7 days without using a patch.
- You will get your period during the no patch week.
- The day of the week you first put the patch on will be the same day you change the patch. For example, if you put on your very first patch on a Sunday, this will be your “patch change day.” This means that you will start and change each new patch on a Sunday.
- You can put the patch on your buttocks, lower stomach, upper back, or upper outer arm.

### **Never put the patch on your breasts.**

- To put on the patch, first open the foil package.
  - Peel the patch and the plastic together off of the foil liner. Be careful not to separate the patch from the layer of clear plastic that covers it.
  - Peel away half of the plastic and put the sticky side of the patch on your skin. Then remove the other half of the clear plastic and press the patch onto your skin.
  - Hold the patch firmly on your skin with the palm of your hand for 10 seconds.

### **Tips about using the patch:**

- ✓ Put the patch on clean, dry, unbroken skin.
- ✓ Put the patch on your buttocks, lower stomach, upper back, or upper outer arm.
- ✓ Never put the patch on your breasts.
- ✓ Do not put the patch on skin where you have used lotions, creams, powders, or oils.
- ✓ Do not use any kind of oils or creams on your skin anywhere near the patch.
- ✓ To avoid irritation, do not put a new patch on the same place as the one you just took off.
- ✓ Do not touch the sticky part of the patch when opening it or putting it on your skin.
- ✓ Do not stretch out the skin before putting on the patch.
- ✓ Do not decorate the patch.
- ✓ Check the patch every day to make sure it is sticking.
- ✓ Do not use Band-Aids or tape to put a patch on or keep it on.
- ✓ Store the extra patches at room temperature.
- ✓ Store and throw away patches out of reach of children and pets (hormones in patches can hurt children or animals). Fold used patch in half so that it sticks to itself before throwing it away. Throw away patches in the trash. Do not throw away in the toilet.

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### What if the patch falls off?

- **If the patch has been off for less than 48 hours**, you should still be protected from pregnancy. Put on a new patch as soon as possible.
  - If it has been less than 24 hours, first try to put the old patch back on. If it doesn't stick, put on a new patch.
  - Do not try to put a patch back on if it has fallen off before, has anything stuck to it, or if it has stuck to itself. Instead, put on a new patch.
- **If the patch has been off for two or more days, or if you don't know how long the patch has been off**, you are not still protected from pregnancy.
  - Put on a new patch as soon as possible
  - Stay on the same schedule of when to change the patch.
  - Use condoms or don't have sex until the patch has been back on for 7 days in a row.
  - If you have unprotected sex during the time the patch has been off or during the first 7 days after you put it back in, call your health care provider about emergency contraception (EC).
  - If the patch was off for more than 48 hours during the third week:
    - Put on a new patch and finish the third week.
    - Immediately put on a new patch the next day. Do not skip a week.
    - Use condoms or don't have sex for 7 days

### What if I forget to change the patch on time?

- If you are less than 48 hours late, put on a new patch as soon as you remember.
- If you are 2 or more days late, put on a new patch as soon as you remember and use condoms or don't have sex until the patch has been on for 7 days.
- If you forgot to put on a new patch during the first or third week and have unprotected sex, call your health care provider to ask about emergency contraception (EC).
- If you forget to take off the patch during the normal no patch week, you are still protected from pregnancy. Remove the patch when you remember and start the next one on your next patch start day.

### Emergency contraception (EC)

EC is a type of birth control used by a woman within 5 days after unprotected sex. It works best to prevent pregnancy if used very soon after unprotected sex. If you need EC or want more information about whether you should use it, call your health care provider, family planning counselor, or pharmacist.