

There is a chance that you can get pregnant if you forget to change your **patch** on the right day or if it falls off.

### I Forgot to Change My Patch

1st week (2 patches left in the box)

- Remove old **patch**. Put new **patch** on right away. Use condoms for 7 days. Use **emergency contraception (EC)** if you have had sex in the past 5 days. The **patch** should be changed in one week on the new “**patch** change day.”

2nd or 3rd week (1 or 0 patches left in box):

- **1 – 2 days late:** Remove old **patch**. Put new **patch** on right away. No back-up or **EC** is needed. The **patch** should be changed in one week on the new “**patch** change day.”
- **More than 2 days late:** Remove old **patch**. Put new **patch** on right away. Use condoms for 7 days. Use **EC** if you have had sex in the past 5 days. The **patch** should be changed in one week on the new “**patch** change day.”

### My Patch Came Off

- If **patch** is partly off, do not pull it off. Press it firmly with the palm of your hand for 10 secs. If it still does not stick well, remove it and put on a new **patch**.
- If the **patch** comes off all the way, try to put it back on if it is clean. Press it firmly onto your skin with the palm of your hand for 10 secs. If this does not work, put on a new **patch** right away.
- If you do not know how long the **patch** has been off, use condoms for 7 days. Use **EC** if you have had sex in the past 5 days.

### If you have sex and do not use birth control you can become pregnant.

You can also become pregnant if you do not use your birth control properly. If this happens, you can get **EC** to avoid getting pregnant.

Use **EC** as soon as you can after unprotected sex.

**Plan B** is a type of **EC**. It comes in a package with two white **pills**. Take both **pills** at the same time as soon as you can after unprotected sex (within 5 days but the sooner the better).

You can get **Plan B** free at youth clinics, for about \$25-\$35 at drugstores (no prescription needed) or at some walk-in clinics.

To find out where you can get **EC** call **1-800-SEX-SENSE**.

### Nutrition and Birth Control

Health Canada says that all women who are having sex should:

- Eat a variety of healthy foods from the four food groups of Canada’s Food Guide
- Take a daily multivitamin that has calcium and folic acid in it

For free nutrition information call:

**Dial-a-Dietitian** at **604-732-9191** or visit **www.dialadietitian.org**.

### Questions?

If you have questions about your **birth control**, do not stop taking them.

Call your **health care provider** or **youth clinic** or **1-800-SEX-SENSE**.



Youth clinic hours may change. To look up the youth clinic closest to you on the internet go to **www.vch.ca**. Please call the clinic first to make sure it is open before you drop in.

Visit our websites:  
**www.vch.ca**  
**www.planetahead.ca**

Additional resources to call and ask questions:  
**24-Hour BC Health Guide NurseLine**  
**604-215-4700**  
**1-866-215-4700 (toll free)**

**Vancouver Coastal Health**  
*Promoting wellness. Ensuring care.*

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The information in this document is intended solely for the person to whom it was given by the health care team.  
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# The Patch

Birth Control Skin Patch



**What is combined hormonal birth control?**

Combined hormonal **birth control** uses two types of hormones to stop you from getting pregnant. They are called estrogen and progesterin.

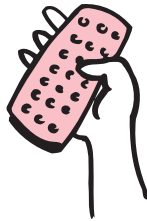
**How does it work?**

The hormones stop your ovaries from releasing an egg each month. When you stop this type of **birth control** you can become pregnant.

**What choices do I have?**

There are three types of combined hormone **birth control**:

- pills
- **skin patch (Evra)**
- vaginal ring (Nuvaring)



**Is birth control safe & will it work?**

All of the above **birth control** methods are safe and very effective at preventing pregnancy if used correctly.

**What is the cost of birth control?**

- free at youth clinics
- \$15 – 25 per package at a drugstore
- some clinics sell **birth control** methods for less



**The Birth Control Patch - “The Patch”**

**Advantages?**

- periods are regular and lighter with fewer days of bleeding
- less period pain and cramps
- sometimes helps with acne
- protects from cysts in the breasts
- can help with anemia (not enough iron)
- lowers risk of ovarian and uterine cancers
- Only need to change it once a week

**Disadvantages?**

- have to remember to change the **patch** on the same day each week
- may need a prescription to buy the **patch** at a drugstore
- does not protect from sexually transmitted infections or HIV/AIDS

**Side effects:**

Some women have side effects such as:

- nausea
- headaches
- sore breasts
- mood changes
- spotting
- skin rash (bleeding between periods)

If you get side effects and they bother you, go back to a clinic to talk about other options **before** you stop taking your **patch**.

**Warning** – Reasons to get medical help:

- very bad headache
- severe pain in your stomach
- severe leg pain
- chest pain
- difficulty breathing
- sudden change in seeing or speaking clearly

**How do you start the patch**

- put the **patch** on right away (or on the first day of your next period). Note what day of the week you put your **patch** on – this is your “**patch** change day.”
- you can put the **patch** anywhere on your body except your breasts or legs

**How to keep using the patch**

If you keep using the **patch** as directed you are protected from pregnancy all the time

- Change the **patch** once a week for three weeks on your “**patch** change day”, then take one week off. Start the cycle again. You will get your period during the week off.
- During the “**patch**-free” week, you must not take more than 7 days off or you will not be protected from pregnancy. Apply a new **patch** on your normal “**patch** change day” even if you are still on your period.

Keep your patches out of really hot or really cold places

**The Birth Control Pill, Patch and Ring DO NOT protect you from sexually transmitted infections (STIs).**

If you think you might not use condoms every time you have sex, you and your partner(s) may want to get tested for STIs. Testing can be done at our youth clinics or by your health care provider.

You May Have Heard...	The Truth...
The <b>pill/patch/ring</b> will make you fat	Most women do not gain weight on these methods.
The <b>pill/patch/ring</b> will make it harder for you to have a baby in the future.	None of these methods will cause problems with having children in the future.
The <b>pill/patch/ring</b> will cause birth defects	The <b>pill/patch/ring</b> does not cause birth defects – even if you get pregnant while using it.
The <b>pill/patch/ring</b> causes breast cancer	The <b>pill/patch/ring</b> does not increase your risk of getting breast cancer
The <b>pill/patch/ring</b> causes blood clots, heart attacks and strokes	The <b>pill/patch/ring</b> may slightly increase your chances of having a blood clot, heart attack or stroke; but not as much as pregnancy does
You need to take a “rest” from the <b>pill/patch/ring</b>	The <b>pill/patch/ring</b> are so safe that your body does not need a rest from it