

# How to use the contraceptive patch

## Information for patients

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Apply your first patch on the day you take misoprostol - unless advised differently by your doctor or nurse. You will be protected from pregnancy immediately. If you delay starting your patch for more than 5 days after your procedure, then you must use condoms or abstain from sex for 7 days after the patch is applied. You will then be protected against pregnancy.

If you do not commence your patch as above and have unprotected sex, you may require emergency contraception. Please contact your GP, local pharmacy or Chalmers Sexual Health Centre for advice. Tel: 0131 536 1070.

Do not apply the patch on your breasts or any skin that is irritated or sore. Generally women wear the patch on the buttock, lower abdomen or upper arm. Change the site of each new patch. Avoid putting the patch on immediately after a bath or shower or after applying moisturiser as you need to make sure your skin is absolutely dry.

Remove the patch after 7 days and apply a new one, each patch is worn for 7 days maximum.

## Tailored methods of using the patch

- **Standard Use (21/4 or 21/7)**

Change your patch on the same day each week for 3 weeks in total, and then stop for 4 or 7 days before applying your next patch. You will usually have a withdrawal bleed. Apply a new patch on the fifth or eighth day even if you are still bleeding.

- **Continuous Use**

Change your patch every 7 days with no break. You won't have a withdrawal bleed but might still experience some bleeding. Any bleeding you get is likely to reduce over time. If you can't wait for the bleeding to settle down, then try flexible extended patch use (advised below).

- **Flexible extended use**

Change your patch on the same day each week for until bleeding occurs for 3-4 days in a row and then remove your patch for 4 days. Apply a new patch on the fifth day even if you are still bleeding and then change weekly for at least 3 weeks (21 days). Only stop for a 4-day break if you have bleeding for 3-4 days in a row and you have used the patch for at least 21 days.

- **Extended Use (63/4 or 63/7)**

Change your patch weekly for 9 weeks and then have a patch-free break of either 4 or 7 days. You will usually have a withdrawal bleed during this patch-free break. Apply a new patch on the fifth or eighth day even if you are still bleeding.

## If you forget to put a patch on at the end of the patch free week

Put a new patch on as soon as you remember. If you are more than 48 hours (2 days) late, use condoms/abstain for 7 days. If you have had unprotected sex during the last few days, you may need to use emergency contraception.

## What to do if the patch falls off

Reapply if it is still sticky, otherwise apply a new patch. If the patch has been off for longer than 24 hours, use condoms for the next seven days. If you have had unprotected sex in the previous few days, you may need to use emergency contraception.

## Other medicines

Certain medicines including the herbal remedy St John's Wort may make the patch less effective. When other medicines are prescribed for you, check with your GP whether or not it will be necessary to use condoms. Vomiting and diarrhoea will not affect the working of the patch.

## Safer sex

The patch does not protect you from sexually transmitted infection. Use condoms with new partners and test regularly.

## If you have any problems, do not hesitate to contact us.

Chalmers Centre  
2A Chalmers Street  
Edinburgh  
EH3 9ES  
Tel 0131 536 1070

Gynaecology Outpatients  
OPD 3  
St John's Hospital  
Livingston  
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