

THE ESTROGEN PATCH

Estradiol is the natural form of the female hormone estrogen, which is usually produced in the ovaries. Estradiol is used to replace estrogen in conditions where the body cannot form its own or is not forming enough.

How is estradiol given?

Estradiol comes in the form of a patch which is applied directly to the skin. It then passes slowly into the bloodstream through the skin. The patch that the doctor prescribes will depend on the age and condition of the patient.

Before using the estrogen patch, the doctor or pharmacist should be informed:

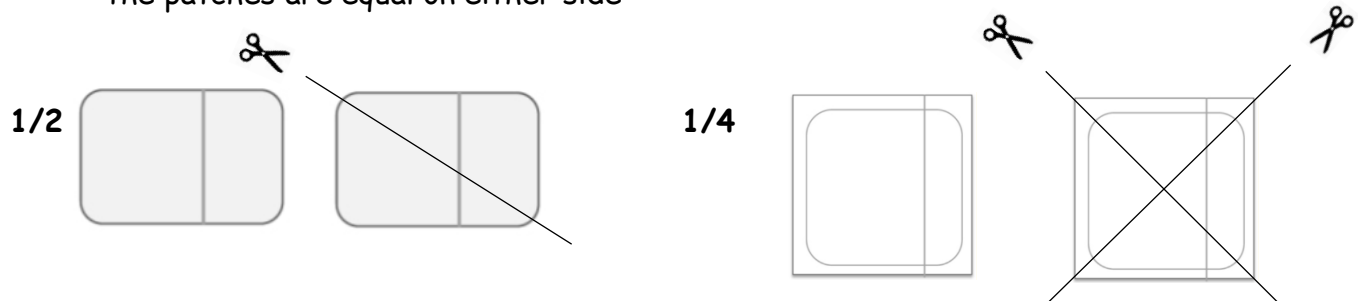
- If the patient is allergic to any of the ingredients listed in the patch
- If the patient has a rare blood problem known as porphyria
- Of all the medications and/or supplements the patient is taking

How and when the estrogen patch should be applied:

The doctor will have worked out the correct proportion of the patch (dose) to be used.

The lines in the diagrams below show where to cut the patch.

- **To obtain half (1/2) of a patch:** Depending on the shape of your patch, cut the square patch diagonally from end to end
- **To obtain quarter (1/4) of a patch:** Cut the patch in half and then half again, so that the patches are equal on either side



Once the estrogen patch has been cut, the remaining section of the patch should be returned to its cover and stored in the fridge. Discard this after one week if unused.

Applying the patch:

Step 1: How to open and peel the estrogen patch

Tear along the indented notches and remove the patch. Do not use scissors as you may cut the patch. With the protective backing facing you, bend, and peel half of the backing strip.

Step 2: How to apply and press the estrogen patch

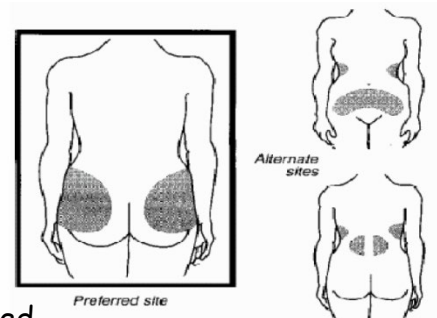
Remove the old patch before applying a new one. Apply the open half of the patch to your skin. Remove the remaining backing strip and press down the rest of the patch. Press the patch with the palm of your hand for 10 seconds to make sure it is firmly stuck. If you are cutting the patch, you may have to use additional adhesive tape to secure the patch in place.

Where to apply the estrogen patch:

- Apply the estrogen patch to clean, dry, cool skin as soon as you open the protective pouch
- Stick the estrogen patch onto a hairless area of skin below the waist, avoiding folds of skin
- Keep the estrogen patch covered, out of direct sunlight
- It can be worn under loose areas of clothing

DO NOT:

- Apply the patch on the same area of skin twice in a row
- Apply on or near the breasts
- Put it on top of cuts, spots or anywhere the skin is irritated
- Use cream, moisturiser, or talcum powder before applying the patch
- Wear the patch under tight clothing, elasticated areas, or a tight waistband



Everyday activities: Patients using estrogen patch can:

- ✓ Have a bath or shower as normal. Care should be taken not scrub too hard on and around the patch as this can loosen the edges.
- ✓ Go swimming. The patch will not be affected
- ✓ Exercise and play sports.

Changing the estrogen patches:

The estrogen patch must be changed approximately **twice a week** (about every **3½ days**) to give the body a steady supply of hormones. To help remember this, plan to change the patch on the same 2 days of the week (for example, Sunday evening and Thursday morning). You can put a reminder on a calendar or in your phone.

Removing an estrogen patch:

1. Peel an edge of the patch smoothly away from the skin.
2. Fold the used estrogen patch in half, so that the sticky side sticks to itself.
3. Dispose of the estrogen patch in with the household garbage, safely out of the reach of children and pets.
4. Do not flush the used patches down the toilet.
5. When the estrogen patch is removed some glue may remain on the skin. It will disappear with time; baby oil can be used to remove the remaining adhesive.

What to do if an estrogen patch falls off

A new estrogen patch should be applied. If the patch has fallen off after the patient has just had a bath or shower, they should wait until the skin cools before a new patch is applied. The prescribing doctor should be contacted if more estrogen patches are needed. If a patch is not changed as usual another patch should be applied as soon as possible.

When should the estrogen patch start working?

This medication will work gradually as estrogen is replaced into the body. Before stopping estrogen patches for any reason the prescribing doctor should be contacted.

Are there any possible side effects from using estrogen patches?

Like any medicine, estradiol may have side effects but not everybody gets them. See product insert for full list of potential side effects. Talk to your doctor if you have persistent intolerable side effects.

Potential common side effects: abdominal pain, bloating and nausea, migraine/headache, persistent sad mood (depression), patch site skin irritation, weight gain, fluid retention/swelling of legs, feet or fingers, vaginal bleeding/spotting, changes in vaginal discharge, breast tenderness/enlargement, dizziness

Potential less common side effects: change in sex drive, hair loss, excessive hairiness, lump in breast, benign growth of the uterus, muscle pain, vaginal thrush

Seek medical attention for any of the following: crushing chest pain, sharp pain in the chest, shortness of breath, sudden partial or complete loss of vision, pain/swelling of the leg, sudden severe headache, yellowing of the skin or eyes, signs of allergic reaction