What is Ortho Evra?
Ortho Evra is a prescription hormonal birth control device. A thin plastic patch that adheres to the skin, Ortho Evra is 99% effective in preventing pregnancy when used correctly. It contains the same hormones (estrogen and progesterone) found in birth control pills. The sticky surface of the patch delivers the hormones through the skin, and they are absorbed into the bloodstream, keeping the ovaries from releasing eggs and thickening cervical mucus (which makes it difficult for sperm to enter the uterus).

Is the patch right for you?
Advantages
Many women choose the patch because it:
• is easy to use.
• only needs changing three times a month.
• permits sexual spontaneity.
• maintains regular periods and relieves some menstrual problems (e.g., can shorten periods; reduce the incidence of iron deficiency anemia; minimize cramps and PMS; correct menstrual irregularity/amenorrhea).
• prevents and/or treats endometriosis.
• decreases the incidence of ovarian cysts, fibrocystic breast syndrome and fibroadenomas of the breast.
• lowers the risk of ovarian and endometrial cancer.
• can diminish acne.

Disadvantages
• Skin reactions or irritation at the patch site are possible.
• Need to remember to change the patch weekly for three weeks in a row.
• May be less effective for women weighing 198 pounds or more.

Side effects
Some women may experience nausea and/or vomiting, breast tenderness and moodiness.
Side effects of hormonal birth control methods typically lessen over time, but it is important to discuss any concerns you have with a nurse or clinician.

Contraindications
Cigarette smoking: Smoking increases the risk of serious cardiovascular problems from hormonal contraceptive use. The risk increases with age and the amount of smoking. Women who use Ortho Evra are strongly urged not to smoke.

Chronic conditions: If you have a chronic medical problem, you will need to discuss the risks of using Ortho Evra as it relates to your particular situation. Most of the time, it is relatively safe. However, if you have any of the following conditions, check with your clinician about your ability to use Ortho Evra safely:
• thrombophlebitis, thromboembolic disorders, cerebral vascular disease, coronary artery disease or past history of these conditions
• markedly impaired liver function or hepatic adenoma
• undiagnosed breast masses or known or suspected carcinoma of the breast
• known or suspected estrogen-dependent tumor
• unexplained genital bleeding
• known or suspected pregnancy
• history of migraines and headaches
• history of elevated cholesterol
• high blood pressure

How to get a prescription
Request an appointment via phone (607 255.5155), online via myGannett, or by visiting Gannett during business hours. Ask for a “well woman visit” if it is time for a pap smear and/or check-up. Request a contraception visit if you feel you don’t need a check-up, Pap smear or STI testing. At your appointment, the clinician will talk with you more about Ortho Evra and other contraceptive options.

Using Ortho Evra
You can wear Ortho Evra on your abdomen, upper torso (excluding the breast), outside of your upper arm or on your buttocks. A different site can be selected each week if you choose, but wherever you choose, the patch must remain there for seven (7) days. It is a good idea to avoid placing the patch in the exact same spot each week but you can wear it in the same general location if preferred.

Women should never apply the patch to any skin that is red, irritated or cut. Only one patch should be worn at a time. Women who use Ortho Evra should check the patch every day to make sure it is sticking properly (“creasing” and “crinkling” are not a problem). If the patch does not stick to the skin by itself, it will NOT be effective. You should never use tape or other adhesives to keep the patch in place. Instead, apply a new patch.

Application instructions
• Apply the patch to cool, clean, dry skin (i.e., not immediately after a shower/bath). Avoid putting creams, lotions, oils,
If you're 1-2 days late: put on a new patch.

• The patch is covered by a layer of clear plastic. Remove the patch and plastic together from the foil pouch.
• Using your fingernail, lift one corner of the patch and peel the patch and plastic off the foil liner.
• Peel away half of the clear plastic. Avoid touching the sticky surface with your fingers.
• Apply the sticky side of the patch to clean, dry skin. Then, remove the other half of the clear plastic.
• Press firmly on the patch, with the palm of your hand for 10 seconds, making sure that the edges stick properly.
• Wear each patch for one full week.
• Apply a new patch once a week (on the same day each week) for three weeks in a row.
• During week 4, do not wear a patch. (Your period is expected to begin during this time.)

If the patch is loose or falls off
• It’s been fewer than 24 hours, apply a new patch right away. No back up contraception is needed.
• It’s been more than 24 hours (or you’re not sure), start a new 4 week cycle with a new patch change day. Use a back up contraceptive (e.g. condoms) for the first week with the new patch.

Removing and disposing of the patch
When removing the used patch, simply lift off one corner and peel back quickly. Because used patches still contain active hormones, carefully fold the used patch in half so that it sticks to itself. Put it in a plastic bag before you throw it away to reduce the chance of estrogen seeping into the soil and water supply. Do not flush patches down the toilet.

If you forget
• To change the patch after the 1st week, you could become pregnant.
• Put on a new patch as soon as you re-member and use backup protection (e.g. a condom) for the following week.
• To change the patch during the 2nd or 3rd week:
  • If you’re 1-2 days late: put on a new patch. No back up contraception is needed.
  • If you’re more than 2 days late: put on a new patch. Start a new 4 week cycle and a new patch change day. Use backup contraception for the first week with the new patch.

If you forget
• To take your patch off at the end of the 3rd week:
• Remove it as soon as you remember. No back-up contraception is needed. Apply the next patch on the same day as planned.

If you are taking certain medications
Some drugs you may need to take for medical conditions may decrease the effectiveness of the patch. If you are using any of the following drugs, tell your clinician:
• Rifampin
• Griseofulvin
• Phenytoin
• Pheno-barbital
• Topiramate
• Carbamazepine
• Antiretrovirals
• St. John’s Wort
You must inform all health care providers that you use the patch, especially if you are in a leg cast or scheduled for surgery. If you have any questions, ask.

Warning Signs
It is important to be aware of the very rare but potentially serious complications that may arise as the result of Ortho Evra use (e.g. gall stones, blood clots). If you experience any of the following, please call Gannett for consultation:
• Severe abdominal pain lasting more than 30 minutes
• Severe chest pain or shortness of breath
• Increase in frequency or severity of headaches, especially if associated with weakness, numbness, or vision disturbances
• Loss of vision, double or blurred vision
• Speech problems
• Severe pain in the calf or thighs

Switching from other hormonal contraceptives
Individuals may change from other hormonal methods of contraception to Ortho Evra. In order to obtain a prescription, please schedule an appointment at Gannett with a clinician.

Additional considerations
No hormonal method of birth control protects against sexually transmitted infections (STI) including HIV. Latex barriers (condoms or squares) are the best way for sexually active people to protect themselves against STIs when you or your partner have had other sex partners. Condoms, lubricants, and other sexual health products can be purchased at the Gannett Pharmacy.

More information
The clinicians and sexual health nurses at Gannett can talk with you about any concerns you may have about Ortho Evra, other birth control methods, and/or reducing risks of STIs and/or testing. Request an appointment via phone (607 255-5155), online via myGannett, or in person during business hours.

Additional information can be found at www.orthoevra.com

Note: This fact sheet is not intended to replace the package insert. Please refer to the package insert for more comprehensive information.