

## THE PILL — BIRTH CONTROL PILLS / THE PATCH / THE RING

Planned Parenthood Northern California 1-925-676-0300

**What are the pill, the patch, and the ring?**

These are birth control methods made of the hormones estrogen and progestin. They are like the hormones made by your body. These hormones keep you from getting pregnant in 2 ways:

- They keep eggs from leaving the ovaries.
- They make cervical mucus thicker. This keeps sperm from getting to the eggs.

**Before getting the pill, the patch, or the ring, you need to know about the most common benefits, risks, side effects, and other choices you have. We are happy to answer any questions you have.**

**What are the benefits of the pill, patch, and ring?**

- There's nothing you have to do before sex to make these methods work. Being able to get pregnant comes back quickly after stopping.
- These methods can protect you from
 

○ Acne	○ Cancer of the ovaries	○ Irregular periods
○ Anemia (iron poor blood)	○ Cancer of the uterus	○ Pregnancy in the tubes
○ Bad cramps	○ Cysts in the breasts and ovaries	○ PMS
○ Bone thinning	○ Heavy periods	○ Serious infection in the ovaries, tubes, and uterus

**How well do they work?**

- For every 100 people who use the pill, patch or ring perfectly for a year, only 1 will get pregnant.
- For every 100 people who do not use the pill, patch, or ring perfectly for a year, about 9 will get pregnant.

**What are the risks of the pill, patch, or ring?**

People on the pill, patch, or ring have a slightly greater risk of having rare serious problems that can cause damage to the lungs, heart or brain. These include:

- Blood clots that start in the legs and go to the lungs
- Heart attack
- Liver tumors
- Stroke

The more a person is at risk for heart disease and stroke, the greater the chances of having these serious health problems with these methods. The risks go up if you:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| ▪ Are older than 35                    | ▪ Have high blood pressure                   |
| ▪ Smoke                                | ▪ Have high cholesterol                      |
| ▪ Have diabetes (sugar)                | ▪ Have had a stroke, heart attack, or angina |
| ▪ Have a family history of blood clots | ▪ Are very overweight                        |

**What are the side effects of the pill, patch or ring?**

You may have

- Headaches
- Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach) — usually clears up in 2 or 3 months
- Sore breasts — usually clears up in 2 or 3 months
- Irregular bleeding — including early or late periods, spotting between periods or no periods

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**Also:**

- Some people using the patch notice sore skin where the patch goes on.
- Some people using the ring notice more vaginal wetness.

**What are my other choices?**

There are many other methods of birth control. We will offer you information about them and answer your questions.

**Can I use the pill, patch or ring?**

People with certain health problems can't use the pill, patch, or ring. Talk with your doctor or nurse about your risks and health problems. It will help you decide if the pill, patch, or ring is right for you.

**How do I use the pill, patch, and ring?**

We will give you instructions on ways to use the pill, patch, or ring. Talk to your doctor or nurse about which way is best for you.

**What else do I need to know?**

Read the package insert that comes with your pack. The information may be different from ours. Let us know if you have questions.

**All of these methods:**

- May not work quite as well for people who are taking certain other medicines including herbals like St. John's wort and some that are used for TB, seizures, mental disorders, or HIV/AIDS.
- May affect other medicines you take. Always tell your doctor or nurse about your medicines.
- Do not protect you from sexually transmitted infections.

The pill and the patch may not work quite as well for people who are overweight.

**Your health is important to us.** If you have any questions or concerns, please call us. We are happy to help you.

**Call us right away at 1-800-454-9125 if you have:**

- Sudden back/jaw pain along with nausea, sweating, or trouble breathing
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Achy soreness in the leg
- Trouble breathing
- Severe pain in the belly
- A sudden very bad headache
- Headaches that are different, worse, or happen more often than usual
- Aura – seeing bright, flashing zigzags, usually before a very bad headache
- Unusually heavy bleeding from the vagina