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**Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances**  
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**Ortho Evra – The Facts Women Should Know**

**By Heather Colman**

Ortho Evra, commonly known as "the patch," is a form of contraception for women. The biggest

difference in Ortho Evra and other types of birth control is that it is used as a patch, similar to a sticker that is placed on strategic areas of the woman's body. Three patches are used for a period of three weeks, one patch per week, and the fourth week is patch free and when the women receives her period.

Lots of women began using the Ortho Evra patch as soon as it was approved in 2001 as a form of contraception because it was easier to remember to change the patch once per week than to take the pill every single day. However, there are more facts about Ortho Evra than simply how it is used and its convenience factor.

How Does Ortho Evra Work? Ortho Evra is a small and thin flesh colored patch. Basically, it is like a square sticker that is easily applied to the skin. Once applied to the skin the Ortho Evra patch emits the hormones progestin and estrogen. These hormones are released gradually over the week period the patch is applied. The hormones enter the woman's bloodstream and provide significant protection against contraception.

For the Ortho Evra patch to be as effective as possible then the woman needs to use it exactly as prescribed. This includes changing the patch every week on the same day. As long as the Ortho Evra patch is used as prescribed it provides women a 99% rate of effectiveness at preventing pregnancy. That is to say that one woman out of every 100 women using the Ortho Evra patch perfectly will become pregnant. This is very similar to the contraception rate of the birth control pill.

Warnings Ortho Evra is a great option for birth control. However, it is not a great option for every woman especially those who smoke. Smoking while using hormonal contraceptives like Ortho Evra increases the risk of cardiovascular side effects significantly. Additionally, the risk of cardiovascular side effects increases even more with more than 15 cigarettes per day and with age. Women over 35 who smoke heavily are in the highest risk category.

Women who are pregnant or think they may be pregnant should not use the patch. Likewise, women who have a history of cardiac disease, heart attack, or stroke should not use Ortho Evra. Some other health problems that make using the patch dangerous include cancer of the cervix, uterus, breast, or vagina. Also, extremely high blood pressure, Hepatitis, blood clots in the legs, eyes, or lungs, as well as liver problems or headaches with neurological problems are health problems that should prevent women from using the Ortho Evra patch.

Another important issue regarding Ortho Evra is that it is strictly a contraceptive. It in no way protects against HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases. As a result, users of Ortho Evra must protect themselves against sexually transmitted diseases in other ways.

Recalls Ortho Evra became available in 2001 and millions of women found the new transdermal form of birth control a godsend. However, by 2005 concerns were raised about Ortho Evra and how it might raise the risk of women dying from a blood clot. There are 17 deaths associated with the Ortho Evra patch where young and healthy women died from a blood clot. Another five deaths from heart attack

and stroke have been associated with Ortho Evra. Reportedly, the women who died were all healthy and had no history of blood clots or cardiac problems prior to using the birth control patch.

Researchers and doctors are not completely sure of the death claims from the Ortho Evra patch. As a result, more investigations are planned to determine if Ortho Evra indeed carries an increased risk of death associated with blood clots and heart attacks. There have been some findings that find the risk for blood clots is three in 200,000 for Ortho Evra users and one in 200,000 for pill users.

Final Thoughts Reading this information you might wonder whether Ortho Evra is the best form of birth control for you. The best way to determine the best contraceptive for your lifestyle is to have an open and honest discussion with your gynecologist. Your current state of health as well as health risks will be reviewed before determining if Ortho Evra is the right birth control for you.

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## **Types Of Contact Lenses And Everyday Eye Care With Contacts**

**By James Brown**

There are two types of general contact lenses. Soft lenses and rigid gas permeable lenses are the two types of lenses. The rigid gas permeable is also known as RGP's.

Soft contact lenses are easier to wear because they are more moveable than that of RGP's. This makes them more comfortable to have in your eyes. The soft lens also allows oxygen flow freely to your cornea leaving your eyes feel better.

Rigid gas permeable contact lenses are sturdier and give you better sight making things look clearer. They have a longer life expectancy than that of a soft lens because of their durability.

The soft lens and rigid gas permeable both come in a disposable lens. The more popular of the two for disposable contacts is the soft lens. A disposable lens can have a life of seven to thirty days depending on the type and brand of the contact. However, disposable contacts are usually given to those that wear soft contact lenses.

There is also another category of lenses for those of you have a busy lifestyle and need your contacts almost all of the time. They are called extended wear lenses. These lenses are soft contact lenses because of the high demand of oxygen your cornea needs. There are however, a few RGP's that can be worn as extended wear contact lenses.

There is one last category of contact lenses. These are known as specialized contact lenses and there are two of these. Orthokeratology–K, which is known as Ortho–K, helps to change the curve in your cornea helping them with temporary improvement with how your eyes see objects. Ortho–K is not a permanent fix. Without the Ortho–K lenses as a treatment your eyes would still and always keep the curvature of the cornea.

The second type of specialized contacts is decorative contacts. These contacts change the color of your eyes. They are also used for Halloween to make your eyes look creepy or weird to go along with the theme of your costume. These contacts do not help or change any type of eye problem you may have., but they still have the same risk factors as corrective lenses.

Anyone who wears contact lenses knows there is everyday care for your contacts and for your eyes that you should follow. Always have a pair glasses around to fall back on just in case you would lose a contact or the contact would start irritating your eyes. Washing your hands before putting your contacts in helps with reducing infection.

Another thing to do that can help ensure the safety of your contacts and eyes is to clean out your contact case every time lenses are out of their case. The cleaning of your case will help keep bacteria from growing where you store your lenses. These are just a few important ways to care for your contact lenses and especially your eyes.

Before getting any type of contact lens you need to see your eye doctor for an examination and a prescription for lenses. This will help you decide what types of contacts are best for you.

James Brown writes about

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