

Family Medicine Clerkship Plain Language Summary Template

Title: The patch and the pill have the similar risk for blood clots.

Name: Tasia Halady

Plain Language Summary:

Taking birth control increases your risk for blood clots. Blood clots form in our blood vessels when certain blood products are active. Blood clots can cause brain problems. They can also cause heart attacks. Blood clots can also cause lung problems like trouble breathing. This is because the blood is blocked off by the blood clots. The risk of blood clots is not different in the patch versus the pill. This is according to a study in a journal that measured blood products that cause clots to form. The study had twenty-four women. There were two groups in the study. One group had ten women and the other group had fourteen women. The researchers made sure the women didn't already have risk factors for blood clots. Risk factors like pregnancy in last six months, smoking and family history of blood clots. Both groups tried both the patch for two months and the pill for two months. There were two months between treatments. Results showed similar changes in blood products that increase clots in both the patch and pill. These blood products are part of a chemical pathway that causes the blood to form clots. Other measurements in the study were blood tests for clots.

There are many ways this study could have been more useful. This study did not measure whether people did form clots but only if they had increased risk for clots. Also, this study was only for a few months. Most women are on birth control for long periods of time. This study would have been better if it were over a longer time. Also, it is hard to have strong results with this small of study. Other things that could have made this study better, are not having all the women get both the patch and the pill. Having them get both could have changed the results. It would be a good idea to not weigh your decision to use birth control based on these results. It would be good to look at more studies. Sadly, there have not been many studies comparing the patch or pill. You should choose a birth control based on your individual needs and discuss options with your doctor. But you should be aware of the risk of blood clots. You can decrease your risk on birth control by not smoking and using other types of birth control after 35 years of age.

Additional Resources:

<http://www.plannedparenthood.org/health-topics/birth-control-4211.htm>

<http://www.womenshealth.gov/publications/our-publications/fact-sheet/birth-control-methods.cfm>

Key Words:

Birth control

Clots

Pill

Patch

This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Family Medicine Clerkship at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up-to-date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.

This document was created by a medical student enrolled in the Primary Care Clerkship at the University of Minnesota Medical School as part of the course project. The aim of the project is to present information on a medical topic in the format of a patient education handout. It does not necessarily reflect the views of the University of Minnesota Medical School physicians and faculty. These materials are provided for informational purposes only and are in no way intended to take the place of the advice and recommendations of your personal health care provider. The information provided may no longer be up to date since it has not been reviewed since the date of creation. The information provided should not be used to diagnose a health problem or disease, or as a means of determining treatment. In the event of a medical emergency, immediately contact a doctor or call 911.