

## PACKAGE LEAFLET: INFORMATION FOR THE USER

# Evorel<sup>®</sup> Conti

## Estradiol hemihydrate, norethisterone acetate

Evorel is a registered trademark

### **Read all of this leaflet carefully before you start using this medicine.**

- Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again
- If you have any further questions, ask your doctor or pharmacist
- This medicine has been prescribed for you. Do not pass it on to others. It may harm them, even if their symptoms are the same as yours
- If you get side effects and they become serious or if you notice any side effects not listed in this leaflet, please tell your doctor or pharmacist

### **In this leaflet**

1. What Evorel Conti is and what it is used for
2. Before you use Evorel Conti
3. Safety of HRT
4. How to use Evorel Conti
5. Possible side effects
6. How to store Evorel Conti
7. Further information

## **1. What Evorel Conti is and what it is used for**

The name of your medicine is Evorel Conti. It belongs to a group of medicines called hormone replacement therapy (HRT).

Evorel Conti contains two medicines:

- An oestrogen (estradiol)
- A progestogen (norethisterone)

They are both hormones.

Evorel Conti comes in a 'memory pack'. This can be used to help you remember when to change your patches. Each pack contains eight or twenty-four patches.

The hormones are spread evenly in each patch. They pass slowly into your body through the skin.

### **What Evorel Conti is used for**

Evorel Conti is used:

- For the symptoms of the menopause (see 'What is the menopause?'). It is suitable for women who have not had a period (menstrual bleed) for at least 18 months
- To prevent osteoporosis (weakening of the bones) in women who have had the menopause and are most likely to have bone problems. Evorel Conti is only used if other medicines for osteoporosis have been tried first and they have not worked

### **What is the menopause?**

Women produce oestrogen hormones from their ovaries throughout their adult life. These hormones are important in sexual development and control of the menstrual cycle.

The menopause happens when the level of hormones produced by the ovaries goes down. This is a gradual process. During this time the levels of oestrogen can go up and down. This can cause:

- Hot flushes, night sweats or mood swings
- Vaginal problems such as dryness or itching
- Uncomfortable or painful sexual intercourse

You may get the same symptoms if you have had your ovaries taken out in an operation. This is called a hysterectomy.

### **How Evorel Conti works**

Evorel Conti is known as 'continuous combined' HRT. This is because both hormones in the patch are released all the time.

Evorel Conti patches replace the oestrogen that is normally released by the ovaries. However, in women who still have a womb, taking an oestrogen hormone regularly may cause the lining of your womb to build up and get thicker.

- This means it is necessary to add a progestogen hormone to the oestrogen
- This helps shed the lining of the womb and stop any problems happening

Most women do not have a regular monthly period with Evorel Conti. However, bleeding or spotting does often occur in the first few months until treatment settles down.

## **2. Before you use Evorel Conti**

### **Do not use Evorel Conti if:**

- You are allergic to anything in the patches (listed in section 7)
- You have (or have ever had), or think you may have, breast cancer
- You have ever had a cancer that was made worse by oestrogens (such as endometrial cancer)
- You have a thickening of the lining of the womb which has not been treated
- You have ever had blood clots (thrombosis) or a blood clot that has travelled to your lung (pulmonary embolism)
- You have problems with your blood which increases the likelihood of developing a blood clot (thrombosis)
- You have ever had blocked arteries (arterial thrombo-embolic disease) that gave you angina or a heart attack resulted in a stroke
- You have a blood problem called 'porphyria'

Do not use this medicine if any of the above applies to you. If you are not sure, talk to your doctor or pharmacist before using Evorel Conti.

### **Take special care with Evorel Conti**

Check with your doctor before using Evorel Conti if:

- You have ever had vaginal bleeding which you could not explain
- The lining of your womb has ever got thicker (endometrial hyperplasia)

- You have ever had liver problems

You may still be able to use Evorel Conti, but you should discuss this with your doctor first.

Evorel Conti should not be used by children.

### **Medical check-ups**

Before taking HRT, your doctor should ask about you and your family's medical history. Your doctor may decide to examine your breasts or your tummy, and may do an internal examination. They will only do this if it is necessary for you, or if you have any special concerns.

Once you have started on HRT, see your doctor for regular check-ups (at least once a year). At these check-ups, your doctor may discuss the benefits and risks of continuing to take HRT.

### **Make sure that you:**

- Go for regular breast screening and cervical smear tests
- Regularly check your breasts for any changes such as dimpling of the skin, changes in the nipple, or any lumps you can see or feel

### **Tell your doctor if you have ever had any of the following. You may need these checks more often.**

- A problem caused by growth of the womb lining:
  - Inside the womb (fibroids)
  - Outside the womb (endometriosis)
- Increased risk of blood clots (see 'Blood clots' in section 3 below)
- A family history of increased risk of cancers related to oestrogens (see 'Breast cancer' in section 3 below)
- High blood pressure (hypertension). Your doctor may tell you to stop using Evorel Conti if your blood pressure goes up
- Diabetes
- Gallstones
- Migraine or severe headaches
- Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). This is an allergic condition that causes joint pain, skin rashes and fever
- Epilepsy
- Asthma
- Bone formation in the ear (otosclerosis)
- Liver, heart or kidney problems
- High levels of triglycerides in your blood as you may have a higher risk of pancreatitis (inflammation of the pancreas, which causes severe pain in the abdomen and back)
- Any breast problems

Tell your doctor if these illnesses return or get worse while you are using Evorel Conti.

### **Taking other medicines**

Please tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking or have recently taken any other medicines. This includes medicines that you buy without a prescription or herbal medicines.

**In particular, tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any of the following:**

- Medicines for epilepsy such as phenobarbital, phenytoin or carbamazepine
- Medicines for infections such as rifampicin, rifabutin, nevirapine or efavirenz
- Bosentan - for high blood pressure in the blood vessels of the lungs
- St. John's Wort - for depression

Taking these medicines with Evorel Conti can stop Evorel Conti from working as well. Because of this you may get some bleeding, like a period, when you are not expecting it.

- A medicine for epilepsy called lamotrigine. Using Evorel Conti with lamotrigine could affect control of your epilepsy

### **Operations or tests**

Tell your doctor if you are going to have surgery. You may need to stop taking HRT about 4 to 6 weeks before the operation to reduce the risk of a blood clot. Your doctor will tell you when you can start taking HRT again.

If you visit a hospital or your family doctor for a blood or urine test, tell them that you are taking Evorel Conti. This is because this medicine may affect the results of the tests.

### **Pregnancy and breast-feeding**

Do not use this medicine if you are pregnant, think you may be pregnant or might become pregnant. This is because it may affect the baby.

If you become pregnant, contact your doctor straight away and remove the patch.

Do not use this medicine if you are breast-feeding.

Ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice before taking any medicine if you are pregnant or breast-feeding.

### **Driving or using machines**

There is no information about whether Evorel Conti affects your ability to drive or use machines. See how this medicine affects you before you drive or use any tools or machines.

## **3. Safety of HRT**

As well as benefits, HRT has some risks. Consider the following when deciding to take or continue HRT.

### **Heart disease**

HRT is **not recommended** for women who have had heart disease recently. If you have ever had heart disease, talk to your doctor to see if you should be taking HRT.

### **HRT will not help to prevent heart disease.**

Studies of HRT (oestrogen and progestogen) have shown that women may be slightly more likely to get heart disease.

If you get a **pain in your chest** that spreads to your arm and neck

- **See a doctor as soon as possible**
  - **Do not take any more HRT** until your doctor says you can
- This pain may be a sign of heart disease.

## **Stroke**

Research suggests that HRT slightly increases the risk of having a stroke. Other things that can increase the risk of stroke include:

- Getting older
- High blood pressure
- Smoking
- Drinking too much alcohol
- An irregular heartbeat

If you are worried about any of these things, or if you have had a stroke in the past, talk to your doctor to see if you should take HRT.

### **How likely is a stroke?**

Looking at women in their **50s**, on average, over 5 years:

- In women **not taking HRT - 3 in 1000** would be expected to have a stroke
- In women **taking HRT - 4 in 1000** would be expected to have a stroke

Looking at women in their **60s**, on average, over 5 years:

- In women **not taking HRT - 11 in 1000** would be expected to have a stroke
- In women **taking HRT - 15 in 1000** would be expected to have a stroke

If you get **migraine-type headaches** which you cannot explain:

- **See a doctor as soon as possible**
  - **Do not take any more HRT** until your doctor says you can
- These headaches may be an early warning sign of a stroke.

## **Blood clots**

HRT may increase the risk of blood clots in the veins (also called deep vein thrombosis, or DVT), especially during the first year of taking it.

These blood clots are not always serious. However, if a clot travels to the lungs, it can cause chest pain, breathlessness, collapse or even death. This is called pulmonary embolism, or PE.

You are more likely to get a blood clot if:

- You are very overweight
- You are getting older
- You have had a blood clot before
- Any of your close family have had blood clots
- You are pregnant or have just had a baby
- You have had one or more miscarriages
- You have any blood clotting problem that needs treatment with a medicine such as warfarin
- You are off your feet for a long time because of major surgery, injury or illness
- You are going on a long journey and will not be moving about for some time
- You have a rare illness called SLE (Systemic lupus erythematosus)

If any of these things apply to you, talk to your doctor to see if you should take HRT.

### **How likely is a blood clot?**

Looking at women in their **50s**, on average, over 5 years:

- In women **not taking HRT** - **3 in 1000** would be expected to get a blood clot
- In women **taking HRT** - **7 in 1000** would be expected to get a blood clot

Looking at women in their **60s**, on average, over 5 years:

- In women **not taking HRT** - **8 in 1000** would be expected to get a blood clot
- In women **taking HRT** - **17 in 1000** would be expected to get a blood clot

If you get painful swelling in your leg, sudden chest pain or have difficulty breathing:

- **See a doctor as soon as possible**
- **Do not take any more HRT** until your doctor says you can

These may be signs of a blood clot.

### **Breast cancer**

**Women who have breast cancer, or have had breast cancer in the past, should not take HRT.**

Taking HRT slightly increases the risk of breast cancer. The risk is also slightly increased if you have a later menopause.

- Postmenopausal women taking oestrogen-only HRT for 5 years - the risk is about the same as for a woman of the same age who is still having periods over that time, and not taking HRT
- Women taking oestrogen plus progestogen HRT - the risk is higher than for oestrogen-only HRT. However, oestrogen plus progestogen HRT is beneficial for the endometrium (see 'Endometrial cancer')

For all kinds of HRT, the extra risk of breast cancer goes up the longer you take it. However, it returns to normal within about 5 years after stopping HRT.

Your risk of breast cancer is also higher if:

- You have a close relative (mother, sister or grandmother) who has had breast cancer
- You are very overweight

### How likely is breast cancer?

Looking at women aged 50, on average, over the next 15 years:

- In women **not taking HRT** - **32 in 1000** will get breast cancer
- In women **taking oestrogen-only HRT** at age 50 and take it for **5 years**, between **33 and 34 in 1000** will get breast cancer
- In women **taking oestrogen-only HRT for 10 years** - **37 in 1000** will get breast cancer
- In women **taking oestrogen plus progestogen HRT** at age 50 and take it for **5 years** - **38 in 1000** will get breast cancer
- In women **taking oestrogen plus progestogen HRT for 10 years** - **51 in 1000** will get breast cancer

If you notice any **changes in your breast**, such as:

- Dimpling of the skin
- Changes in the nipple
- Any lumps you can see or feel

**Make an appointment to see your doctor** as soon as possible.

### Endometrial cancer (cancer of the lining of the womb)

**Taking oestrogen-only HRT for a long time can increase the risk of cancer of the lining of the womb** (the endometrium). Taking a **progestogen** as well as the oestrogen helps to lower the extra risk.

**If you still have your womb**, your doctor will usually prescribe a progestogen as well as oestrogen. These may be prescribed separately, or as a combined HRT product.

**If you have had your womb removed** (a hysterectomy), your doctor will discuss with you whether you can safely take oestrogen without a progestogen.

**If you have had your womb removed because of endometriosis**, any endometrium left in your body may be at risk of cancer. This means your doctor may prescribe HRT that includes a progestogen as well as an oestrogen.

Your product, Evorel Conti, contains a progestogen.

### How likely is endometrial cancer?

Looking at women aged 50 who still have a womb, on average, over the next 15 years:

- In women **not taking HRT** - **5 in 1000** will get endometrial cancer
- In women **taking oestrogen-only HRT**, the number will be **2 to 12 times higher**, depending on the dose and how long you take it for

The addition of a progestogen to oestrogen-only HRT substantially reduces the risk of endometrial cancer.

**If you get breakthrough bleeding or spotting**, it is usually nothing to worry about, especially during the first few months of taking HRT.

**But if the bleeding or spotting:**

- Carries on for more than the first few months
- Starts after you have been on HRT for a while

- Carries on even after you've stopped taking HRT

**Make an appointment to see your doctor.** It could be a sign that your endometrium has become thicker.

### **Ovarian cancer**

Ovarian cancer (cancer of the ovaries) is very rare, but it is serious. It can be difficult to diagnose. This is because there are often no obvious signs of the disease. Some studies have suggested that taking HRT for more than 5 years may increase the risk of ovarian cancer.

### **Dementia**

Evorel Conti and medicines like it will not stop memory loss (dementia). Women who start using medicines like Evorel Conti after the age of 65 may have a small increase in the risk of dementia.

## **4. How to use Evorel Conti**

Always use Evorel Conti exactly as your doctor has told you. You should check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure. Your doctor will aim to reduce your symptoms with the lowest possible dose for the shortest amount of time.

### **When to start using Evorel Conti**

**You may put an Evorel Conti patch on at any time if:**

- You have not been using another type of HRT

**Put an Evorel Conti patch on at the end of a treatment cycle or one week after you finish using another HRT product if:**

- You are changing from an HRT medicine that gives you a withdrawal bleed

**If you are using another type of HRT:**

- The day you start will depend on the type of HRT you have been using. Talk to your doctor if you are not sure which type of HRT you are using.

### **Using the patches**

The patches need to be changed twice a week.

Start a new pack of Evorel Conti as soon as you finish one. Do not leave a break between packs.

### **Changing your patches**

- You must change the patches twice a week to give your body a steady supply of hormones. There is enough hormone in each patch to last for several days
- Change your patch on the same two days every week. This will mean that one patch is on for three days and the next patch for four days
- For example, if you apply your first patch on a Monday, change it on Thursday and again on the following Monday. You can work out your two days from the following table, starting from the first day of use:

**If you put your**

**first patch on:**

Monday

→

**Change on:**

Thursday

&

**Change again on:**

Monday

Tuesday

→

Friday

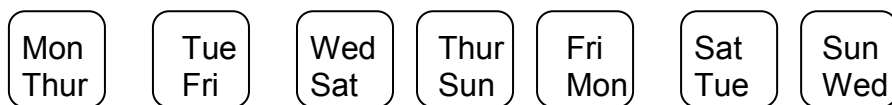
&

Tuesday



Wednesday	→	Saturday	&	Wednesday
Thursday	→	Sunday	&	Thursday
Friday	→	Monday	&	Friday
Saturday	→	Tuesday	&	Saturday
Sunday	→	Wednesday	&	Sunday

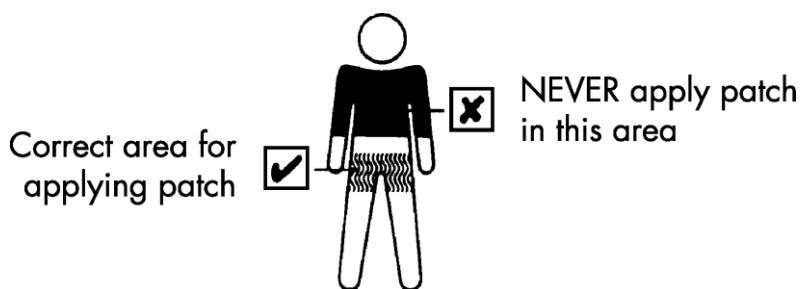
To help you remember your two “patch change” days, mark them here or on the pack. They are written on the pack like this:



### Where to apply the patch

Stick the patch onto a hairless area of skin below the waist. Most women prefer to wear the patch on the thigh or bottom.

- Do not apply on or near the breasts
- Do not put it on top of cuts, spots or anywhere the skin is irritated
- Do not use cream, moisturiser or talc before applying the patch
- Do not apply the patch on the same area of skin twice in a row
- It can be worn under loose areas of clothing
- Do not wear a patch under elasticated areas or a tight waistband
- Apply the patch to clean, dry, cool skin as soon as you open the protective pouch

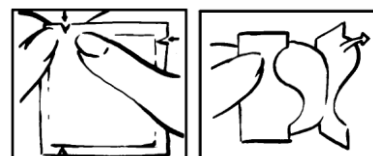


### Putting a patch on

Do not use a patch if its protective pouch is already open.

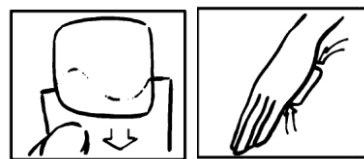
#### Step 1: Open and Peel

- Using the notches as a guide, tear along two edges of the pouch. Remove the patch
- With the protective backing facing you, bend and peel off half the backing. Don't touch the sticky side - it may not stick properly if you do



## Step 2: Apply and Press

- Apply the open half of the patch to your skin
- Remove the remaining backing and press down the rest of the patch
- Press the patch with the palm of your hand to make sure it is firmly stuck



## Removing a patch

- Peel an edge of the patch smoothly away from the skin
- Fold the patch in half, so that the sticky side sticks to itself
- Put it in with the household rubbish, safely out of the reach of children and pets
- Do not flush used patches down the toilet



When you remove the patch some glue may remain on your skin. It will disappear with time, or you can use baby oil to remove it.

## If a patch falls off

Apply a new patch but keep to your original 'patch change' days. If you have just had a bath or a shower, wait until your skin cools before applying the new patch.

Talk to your doctor if you need more patches.

## If you forget to change the patch

Change it as soon as you remember and then keep to your original 'patch change' days. You may get some bleeding and spotting like a period during this time.

## If you use more Evorel Conti than you should

It is unlikely that you will have too much of the hormones in Evorel Conti. The most common symptoms of having too much oestrogen or progesterone in your body are:

- Tender breasts
- Feeling sick (nausea)
- Unexpected vaginal bleeding
- Stomach pain or bloating

Removing the patch can reverse the effects of too much oestrogen and/or progesterone. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist before using any more patches.

## Contraception while using Evorel Conti

The levels of hormone from the patches are too low to act as a contraceptive. Use non-hormonal contraceptive methods (such as a condom, diaphragm or coil) until your periods have completely stopped.

## Everyday activities

- You can have a bath or shower as normal. Do not scrub too hard as this can loosen the edges of the patch
- You can go swimming. The patch will not be affected

- You can exercise and play sports. However, do not wear the patch under tight clothing or waist bands
- You can sunbathe. However, keep the patch covered, out of direct sunlight

If you have any further questions on the use of this product, ask your doctor or pharmacist.

## 5. Possible side effects

Like all medicines, Evorel Conti can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them.

**Take off the patch and tell your doctor straight away if you notice or suspect any of the following. You may need urgent medical treatment.**

- Sudden swelling of the face or throat which may cause difficulty in swallowing or breathing. This may be a sign of an allergic reaction. This only happens in a small number of people
- Blood clots (thrombosis) (affects less than 1 in 1000 people) or stroke (frequency not known)
- Yellowing of the skin or whites of the eyes (jaundice), or other liver problems
- Migraine-type headaches for the first time or more frequent (affects less than 1 in 100 people)
- An increase in blood pressure (affects less than 1 in 10 people)
- Breast or ovarian cancer, endometrial cancer or hyperplasia (long, heavy or irregular periods)
- Widespread rash with peeling skin and blistering in the mouth, eyes and genitals (Stevens-Johnson syndrome) (frequency not known)
- Convulsions or fits (affects less than 1 in 1,000 people)

**Tell your doctor if you notice any of the following side effects while using Evorel Conti:**

**Very common** (affects more than 1 in 10 people)

- Irritated, itchy, red skin and rash where the patch is applied

**Common** (affects less than 1 in 10 people)

- Allergic reaction (hypersensitivity)
- Being unable to sleep
- Feeling depressed, nervous or anxious
- Headache
- Being aware of your heartbeat (palpitations)
- Varicose veins
- Flushing, skin reddening
- Breast pain
- Numb or tingling hands or feet
- Feeling sick (nausea)
- Diarrhoea
- Stomach ache
- Pain including pain in the back or joints
- Painful periods

- Discharge from the vagina
- Irregular, heavy or prolonged bleeding from the vagina, including after sex
- Water retention or build-up of fluid under the skin (oedema)
- Feeling tired
- Weight gain

**Uncommon** (affects less than 1 in 100 people)

- Vaginal infections such as thrush
- Less interest in sex than usual
- Wind
- Itchy skin
- Rash
- Swelling of the hands and feet (peripheral oedema)
- Muscle pain

**Frequency not known**

- Mood swings
- Feeling dizzy
- Bloating feeling
- Gallstones
- Fuller breasts

If any of the side effects gets serious, or if you notice any other side effects not listed in this leaflet, please tell your doctor or pharmacist.

## 6. How to store Evorel Conti

Keep out of the reach and sight of children. It should be stored at room temperature (at or below 25°C). Keep in the original pouch and carton.

Do not use Evorel Conti after the expiry date which is stated on the label. The expiry date refers to the last day of that month.

Do not use a patch if its protective pouch is open.

## 7. Further information

**The active substances** in Evorel Conti are estradiol hemihydrate and norethisterone acetate.

Each Evorel Conti patch contains 3.2 mg of estradiol hemihydrate and 11.2 mg of norethisterone acetate. Each Evorel Conti patch delivers 50 micrograms of estradiol and 170 micrograms of norethisterone acetate a day.

**The other ingredients** are Duro-Tak 387-2287 (this makes the patches sticky), guar gum and Hostaphan MN19 (backing film).

**What Evorel Conti looks like and contents of the pack**

Evorel Conti comes in a memory pack containing eight or twenty-four patches (marked CEN1).

The patches are square with rounded corners. They are clear with a sticky backing that can be stuck to the skin. Each patch comes in a protective sealed pouch and has a surface area of 16 sq cm.

**The product licence is held by:**

JANSSEN-CILAG LTD, 50-100 Holmers Farm Way, High Wycombe,  
Buckinghamshire HP12 4EG, UK

**Evorel Conti is made by:**

Janssen Pharmaceutica NV, Turnhoutseweg 30, B-2340 Beerse, Belgium

OR

McGregor Cory Ltd, Middleton Road, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX 16 8RS, UK

**For information in large print, tape, CD or Braille, telephone  
0800 7318450.**

This leaflet was last approved in March 2012.