

FSRH Guidance

Switching or Starting Methods of Contraception

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Details of changes to guidance document

Since this set of guidance was first published, the following changes have been made:

February 2019 – Page 5: **Current situation:** LNG-IUS (in date), UPSI in last 7 days; **Switching to POP:** retain IUS for **7 days** (not 2 days) after starting.

August 2019 – Page 6: **Current situation:** Incorrect use of existing hormonal method of method has expired **IF** UPSI in last 3 weeks **AND** PT negative; **Starting LNG-IUS** – added text: ‘(Please note for Mirena IUS only: Women who were under the age of 45 years at the time of Mirena IUS insertion and who present for replacement of the device between 5 and 7 years after insertion may have immediate replacement if a pregnancy test is negative and another pregnancy test is advised no sooner than 3 weeks after the last episode of UPSI)’

Switching or Starting Methods of Contraception

This quick guide advises on effective starting or switching between contraceptive methods to reduce the risk of unplanned pregnancy. It summarises information from existing FSRH guidance. This guide should be used in conjunction with clinical judgment in individual situation.

Key to Symbols:



= start method immediately; condoms (or abstinence) not required



= start method, additional condom use (number of days given)



= do not start method

QS = consider 'quick starting' a method

Key to abbreviations:

CHC – combined hormonal contraception (pills, ring, patch)

Cu-IUD – copper intrauterine device

DMPA – depot medroxyprogesterone acetate

EC – emergency contraception

HFI – hormone free interval

LNG-IUS – levonorgestrel-releasing intrauterine system

QS – quick starting

POP – progestogen-only pill










PT – pregnancy test














UPSI – unprotected sexual intercourse










Quick starting

































Quick starting describes starting contraception at the time a woman presents (rather than waiting for the next menstrual cycle). This may be outside the licence of some products. Use of a 'bridging' contraceptive method may be required until pregnancy can be excluded and the woman's preferred contraceptive method started.












For further information see [FSRH guideline Quick Starting Contraception \(2017\)](#)










CURRENT SITUATION	Starting:					
	CHC	POP	DMPA	Implant	LNG-IUS	Cu-IUD
No recent hormonal contraception:						
Day 1-5 of natural cycle (regardless of UPSI)	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
After day 5 of natural cycle, if no UPSI since LMP OR Amenorrhoea, if no UPSI for >3 weeks and PT negative	 for 7 days	 for 2 days	 for 7 days	 for 7 days	 for 7 days	☺
After day 5 of natural cycle, if UPSI since LMP OR Amenorrhoea, if UPSI in last 3 weeks and PT negative Consider the need for EC	QS  for 7 days PT at 3 weeks	QS  for 2 days PT at 3 weeks	QS another bridging method or QS  for 7 days PT at 3 weeks	QS  for 7 days PT at 3 weeks	QS QS another bridging method	if all UPSI in last 5 days or if within 5 days of earliest likely ovulation ☺ If not QS QS another bridging method






CURRENT METHOD	Switching to:					
Combined hormonal contraception: (if taken correctly)	CHC	POP	DMPA	Implant	LNG-IUS	Cu-IUD
CHC Week 2-3 OR Day 1-2 of HFI					 If day 2 of HFI follow advice for day 3-7 below	
CHC Week 1 OR Day 3-7 of HFI AND No UPSI since start of HFI	 for 7 days	 for 2 days	 for 7 days	 for 7 days	 for 7 days	
CHC Week 1 OR Day 3-7 of HFI AND UPSI since start of HFI	Continue CHC until taken for 7 consecutive days then advice as for weeks 2 or 3					

Progestogen only methods:	CHC	POP	DMPA	Implant	LNG-IUS	Cu-IUD
Implant (in situ for <3 years)	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
DMPA <14 weeks since last injection	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺	☺
DMPA >14 weeks since last injection AND No UPSI since 14 weeks	 for 7 days	 for 2 days	 for 7 days	 for 7 days	 for 7 days	☺
DMPA >14 weeks since last injection AND UPSI since 14 weeks <i>Consider the need for a PT and EC</i>	QS  for 7 days PT at 3 weeks	QS  for 2 days PT at 3 weeks	QS another bridging method <i>or</i> QS  7 days PT at 3 weeks	QS  for 7 days PT at 3 weeks	Unless able to exclude pregnancy, QS QS another bridging method	If only UPSI since expiry was in last 5 days ☺ If UPSI since expiry was > 5 days ago, and unable to exclude pregnancy QS QS another bridging method

Traditional POP (if taken correctly)	 for 7 days		 for 7 days	 for 7 days	 for 7 days	
Desogestrel POP (if taken correctly)						
Intra-uterine contraception:	CHC	POP	DMPA	Implant	LNG-IUS	Cu-IUD
LNG-IUS (in date) If no UPSI in last 7 days	 for 7 days	 for 2 days	 for 7 days	 for 7 days		
LNG-IUS (in date) UPSI in last 7 days	Retain LNG-IUS for 7 days after starting	Retain LNG-IUS for 7 days after starting	Retain LNG-IUS for 7 days after starting	Retain LNG-IUS for 7 days after starting	Ideally abstain for 7 days prior to change in case new device can't be inserted	
Cu-IUD day 1-5						
Cu-IUD after day 5 AND No UPSI in the last 7 days	 for 7 days	 for 2 days	 for 7 days	 for 7 days	 for 7 days	
Cu-IUD after day 5 AND UPSI in last 7 days	Retain Cu-IUD for 7 days after starting	Retain Cu-IUD for 7 days after starting	Retain Cu-IUD for 7 days after starting	Retain Cu-IUD for 7 days after starting	Abstain for 7 days prior to change, then  for 7 days	Ideally abstain for 7 days prior to change in case new device can't be inserted then 

CURRENT SITUATION	Starting:					
	CHC	POP	DMPA	Implant	LNG-IUS	Cu-IUD
Incorrect use of existing hormonal method or method has expired						
Incorrect use of existing hormonal method or method has expired <u>IE</u> no UPSI for >3 weeks and PT negative	 for 7 days	 for 2 days	 for 7 days	 for 7 days	 for 7 days	
Incorrect use of existing hormonal method or method has expired <u>IE</u> UPSI in last 3 weeks AND PT negative <i>Consider the need for EC</i>	QS  for 7 days PT at 3 weeks	QS  for 2 days PT at 3 weeks	QS another bridging method or QS  for 7 days PT at 3 weeks	QS  for 7 days PT at 3 weeks	X QS another bridging method (Please note for Mirena IUS only: Women who were under the age of 45 years at the time of Mirena IUS insertion and who present for replacement of the device between 5 and 7 years after insertion may have immediate replacement if a pregnancy test is negative and another pregnancy test is advised no sooner than 3 weeks after the last episode of UPSI)	If all UPSI in last 5 days or If within 5 days of earliest likely ovulation  If not X QS another bridging method

CURRENT SITUATION	Starting:					
After emergency contraception	CHC	POP	DMPA	Implant	LNG-IUS	Cu-IUD
Immediately after ulipristal acetate (ellaOne®)	Do not start any hormonal contraception for 5 days after ellaOne				X	If all UPSI within 5 days or if less than 5 days after earliest likely date of ovulation  If not 
5 days after ulipristal acetate (ellaOne®)	QS  for 7 days PT at 3 weeks	QS  for 2 days PT at 3 weeks	QS another bridging method. <u>or</u> QS  for 7 days PT at 3 weeks	QS  for 7 days PT at 3 weeks	 Consider QS another bridging method	If all UPSI within 5 days or if less than 5 days after earliest likely date of ovulation  If not  and consider QS another bridging method

CURRENT SITUATION	Starting:					
	CHC	POP	DMPA	Implant	LNG-IUS	Cu-IUD
After emergency contraception:						
Levonorgestrel 1500mcg	<p>QS for 7 days</p>  <p>PT at 3 weeks</p>	<p>QS for 2 days</p>  <p>PT at 3 weeks</p>	<p>QS another bridging method <i>or</i> QS for 7 days</p>  <p>PT at 3 weeks</p>	<p>QS for 7 days</p>  <p>PT at 3 weeks</p>	<p>X</p> <p>Consider QS another bridging method</p>	<p>If all UPSI within 5 days or if less than 5 days after earliest likely date of ovulation</p>  <p>If not</p> <p>X</p> <p>and QS another bridging method</p>

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Other colleagues in UK centres also sent in versions of their own switching documents which were helpful comparisons.

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