

NEW SOGC GUIDELINE EXAMINES EFFICACY OF COMBINED HORMONAL CONTRACEPTIVES IN CANADA

Ottawa, April 18, 2017 - The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (SOGC) today released the latest chapter in the Canadian Contraception Consensus series to inform health care providers and women on the most up-to-date choices available in Canada for pregnancy prevention and healthy sexuality. Part four was published today in the Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology Canada (JOGC): [http://www.jogc.com/article/S1701-2163\(16\)39786-9/fulltext](http://www.jogc.com/article/S1701-2163(16)39786-9/fulltext).

This most recent guideline focuses on three combined hormonal contraceptive methods that contain both an estrogen and a progestin. These include the combined oral contraceptive pill, the transdermal contraceptive patch and the vaginal contraceptive ring. Although any of these options can be highly effective, the guideline also strongly recommends physicians talk to their patients about back-up or emergency contraception to manage missed prescription doses.

“Canadian women continue to turn to their physician as the most trusted source for contraception according to a soon-to-be-published SOGC study into women’s contraception health. The best decisions will come from a frank discussion to understand each woman’s specific needs and preferences,” says Dr. Jennifer Blake, CEO of the SOGC. “Not only does contraception choice vary greatly between women, it may also vary during the course of a woman’s life.”

This latest guideline examines the strengths of each of the combined hormonal options. These are some of the options patients are recommended to review with their health care provider before selecting the best option for them:

Combined Hormonal Contraceptive Pill (COC)

- 43.7% of all Canadian women using contraception opt for the COC pill as a reliable and reversible option
- Varying regimens available from 21 days on/7 days off to 84 days on/7 days off
- Overall failure rate of .3% with typical failure rates in the first year closer to 9%
- Non-contraceptive benefits include cycle regulation, reduced menstrual flow, decreased acne, fewer endometriosis-related symptoms and a decreased risk of ovarian and endometrial cancers

Transdermal Contraceptive Patch

- Patch applied to the buttocks, upper outer arm, lower abdomen or, upper torso weekly for 3 consecutive weeks, followed by one week patch-free
- Overall failure rate of .3% with typical failure rates in the first year closer to 9%
- Associated with less breakthrough bleeding and spotting
- COC of choice for women who have difficulty swallowing pills, or those seeking a less compliance-demanding method of contraception, e.g. shift workers

Vaginal Contraceptive Ring

- The ring is inserted into the vagina for three weeks and then removed by the woman for one week
- Overall failure rate of .3% with typical failure rates in the first year closer to 9%
- Associated with less unscheduled bleeding and shorter menstrual bleeding than the COC pill or patch
- Does not have to be remembered each day or require swallowing a pill

The SOGC is also updating the popular SOS tool which advises women what to do in the event of a missed pill or missed dose replacement. It will be available on the updated sexandu.ca website, which will also soon include a comprehensive downloadable section on all contraception options now available in Canada.

Complete list of SOGC Contraception Consensus Guidelines includes:

Canadian Contraception Consensus (Part 1 of 4): Introduction, contraception care, emergency contraception (No. 143, February 2004; No. 174, April 2006; No. 195, July 2007; No. 219, November 2008; & No. 280, September 2012)
Published October 2015

Canadian Contraception Consensus (Part 2 of 4): Barriers, natural planning, sterilization (No. 143, February 2004; No. 174, April 2006; No. 195, July 2007; No. 219, November 2008; & No. 280, September 2012)
Published November 2015

Canadian Contraception Consensus (Part 3 of 4): Chapter 7 – Intrauterine Contraception (No. 143, April 2004)
Published February 2016

Canadian Contraception Consensus (Part 3 of 4): Chapter 8 – Progestin-Only Contraception (No. 143, April 2004)
Published March 2016

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About The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada

The SOGC is one of Canada's oldest national specialty organizations. Established in 1944, the Society's mission is to promote excellence in the practice of obstetrics and gynaecology and to advance the health of women through leadership, advocacy, collaboration and education. The SOGC represents obstetricians/gynaecologists, family physicians, nurses, midwives and allied health professionals working in the field of sexual reproductive health. For more information, visit www.sogc.org.

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