

World Health Organization (WHO) Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use

Third Edition, 2004

TYPE OF CONTRACEPTIVE		
CONDITION	CATEGORY I=Initiation C=Continuation	CLARIFICATIONS/ EVIDENCE
Condition	Condition classified from 1 to 4 The categories for fertility awareness-based methods and surgical sterilization are described at the beginning of the relevant section.	Clarifications and evidence regarding the classification

NA denotes a condition for which a ranking was not given by the Working Group but for which clarifications have been provided.

Classification of categories

Each condition was defined as representing either an individual's characteristics (e.g., age, history of pregnancy) or a known pre-existing medical/pathological condition (e.g., diabetes, hypertension). It is expected that national and institutional health and service delivery environments will decide the most suitable means for screening for conditions according to their public health importance. Client history will often be the most appropriate approach.

The conditions affecting eligibility for the use of each contraceptive method were classified under one of the following four categories:

1. A condition for which there is no restriction for the use of the contraceptive method.
2. A condition where the advantages of using the method generally outweigh the theoretical or proven risks.
3. A condition where the theoretical or proven risks usually outweigh the advantages of using the method.
4. A condition which represents an unacceptable health risk if the contraceptive method is used.

Using the categories in practice

Categories 1 and 4 are self-explanatory. Classification of a method/condition as category 2 indicates the method can generally be used, but careful follow-up may be required. However, provision of a method to a woman with a condition classified as category 3 requires careful clinical judgment and access to clinical services; for such a woman, the severity of the condition and the availability, practicality, and acceptability of alternative methods should be taken into account. For a method/condition classified as category 3, use of that method is not usually recommended unless other more appropriate methods are not available or acceptable. Careful follow-up will be required.

Where resources for clinical judgment are limited, such as in community-based services, the four-category classification framework can be simplified into two categories. With this simplification, a classification of Category 3 indicates that a woman is not medically eligible to use the method.

CATEGORY	WITH CLINICAL JUDGMENT	WITH LIMITED CLINICAL JUDGMENT
1	Use method in any circumstances	Yes (Use the method)
2	Generally use the method	
3	Use of method not usually recommended unless other more appropriate methods are not available or not acceptable	No (Do not use the method)
4	Method not to be used	

ABBREVIATIONS:

COC – Combined oral contraceptive

CIC – Combined injectable contraceptive

P/R – Patch/Ring

POP – Progestin-only pill

DMPA – Depot medroxyprogesterone acetate

NET-EN – Norethisterone enantate

LNG/ETG – Levonorgestrel/Etonorgestrel (Norplant & Jadell/Implanon)

Cu IUD – Copper IUD (ParaGard)

LNG IUD – Levonorgestrel IUD (Mirena)

MEDICAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR CONTRACEPTIVE USE 2004 UPDATE

SUMMARY TABLES								
CONDITION	COC	CIC	P/R	POP	DMPA NET-EN	LNG/ ETG Implants	Cu-IUD	LNG-IUD
<i>I</i> = Initiation, <i>C</i> = Continuation								
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS AND REPRODUCTIVE HISTORY								
PREGNANCY	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*	4*	4*
AGE	Menarche to <40=1 >40=2	Menarche to <40=1 >40=2	Menarche to <18=1 18-45=1 >45=1	Menarche to <18=2 18-45=1 >45=2	Menarche to <18=1 18-45=1 >45=1	Menarche to <20=2 >20=1	Menarche to <20=2 >20=1	Menarche to <20=2 >20=1
PARITY								
a) Nulliparous	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
b) Parous	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
BREASTFEEDING								
a) < 6 weeks postpartum	4	4	4	3*	3*	3*		
b) 6 weeks to < 6 months (primarily breastfeeding)	3	3	3	1	1	1		
c) > 6 months postpartum	2	2	2	1	1	1		
POSTPARTUM (non-breastfeeding women)								
a) < 21 days	3	3	3	1	1	1		
b) > 21 days	1	1	1	1	1	1		
POSTPARTUM (breastfeeding or non- breastfeeding women, including post-caesarean section)								
a) < 48 hours							2	3
b) > 48 hours to <4 weeks							3	3
c) > 4 weeks							1	1
d) Puerperal sepsis							4	4
POST-ABORTION								
a) First trimester	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*
b) Second trimester	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
c) Immediate post-septic abortion	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	4
PAST ECTOPIC PREGNANCY	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1

*Please consult the tables in the text for a clarification to this classification

SUMMARY TABLES								
CONDITION	COC	CIC	P/R	POP	DMPA NET-EN	LNG/ ETG Implants	Cu-IUD	LNG-IUD
<i>I</i> = Initiation, <i>C</i> = Continuation								
HISTORY OF PELVIC SURGERY (including caesarean section) (see also postpartum section)	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
SMOKING								
a) Age < 35	2*	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
b) Age > 35								
(i) <15 cigarettes/day	3*	2	3	1	1	1	1	1
(ii) >15 cigarettes/day	4*	3	4	1	1	1	1	1
OBESITY >30 kg/m ² body mass index (BMI)	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
BLOOD PRESSURE MEASUREMENT UNAVAILABLE	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*	NA*
CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE								
MULTIPLE RISK FACTORS FOR ARTERIAL CARDIOVASCULAR DISEASE (such as older age, smoking, diabetes and hypertension)	3/4*	3/4*	3/4*	2*	3*	2*	1	2
HYPERTENSION								
a) History of hypertension where blood pressure CANNOT be evaluated (including hypertension during pregnancy)	3*	3*	3*	2*	2*	2*	1	2
b) Adequately controlled hypertension, where blood pressure CAN be evaluated	3*	3*	3*	1*	2*	1*	1	1
c) Elevated blood pressure levels (properly taken measurements)	3	3	3	1	2	1	1	1
(i) systolic 140-159 or diastolic 90-99	4	4	4	2	3	2	1	2
(ii) systolic >160 or diastolic >100 d) Vascular disease	4	4	4	2	3	2	1	2

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SUMMARY TABLES								
CONDITION	COC	CIC	P/R	POP	DMPA NET-EN	LNG/ ETG Implants	Cu-IUD	LNG-IUD
<i>I</i> = Initiation, <i>C</i> = Continuation								
HISTORY OF HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE DURING PREGNANCY (where current blood pressure is measurable and normal)	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
DEEP VEIN THROMBOSIS (DVT)/ PULMONARY EMBOLISM (PE)								
a) History of DVT/PE	4	4	4	2	2	2	1	2
b) Current DVT/PE	4	4	4	3	3	3	1	3
c) Family history (firstdegree relatives)	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
d) Major surgery								
(i) with prolonged immobilization	4	4	4	2	2	2	1	2
(ii) without prolonged immobilization	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
e) Minor surgery without immobilization	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
KNOWN THROMBOGENIC MUTATIONS (e.g. Factor V Leiden; Prothrombin mutation; Protein S, Protein C and Antithrombin deficiencies)	4*	4*	4*	2*	2*	2*	1*	2*
SUPERFICIAL VEIN THROMBOSIS								
a) Varicose veins	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
b) Superficial thrombophlebitis	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
CURRENT AND HISTORY OF ISCHAEMIC HEART DISEASE	4	4	4	I C 2 3	3	I C 2 3	1	I C 2 3
STROKE (history of cerebrovascular accident)	4	4	4	I C 2 3	3	I C 2 3	1	2
KNOWN HYPERLIPIDAEMIAS (screening is NOT necessary for safe use of contraceptive methods)	2/3*	2/3*	2/3*	2*	2*	2*	1*	2*

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SUMMARY TABLES									
CONDITION	COC	CIC	P/R	POP	DMPA NET-EN	LNG/ ETG Implants	Cu-IUD	LNG-IUD	
<i>I</i> = Initiation, <i>C</i> = Continuation									
VALVULAR HEART DISEASE									
a) Uncomplicated	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	
b) Complicated (pulmonary hypertension, atrial fibrillation, history of subacute bacterial endocarditis)	4	4	4	1	1	1	2*	2*	
NEUROLOGIC CONDITIONS									
HEADACHES	<i>I</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>I</i>
a) Non-migrainous (mild or severe)	1*	2*	1*	2*	1*	2*	1*	1*	1*
b) Migraine									
(i) without aura									
Age <35	2*	3*	2*	3*	1*	2*	2*	2*	1*
Age >35	3*	4*	3*	4*	1*	2*	2*	2*	1*
(ii) with aura (at any age)	4*	4*	4*	4*	2*	3*	2*	3*	1*
EPILEPSY	1*		1*		1*		1*		1
DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS									
DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS	1*		1*		1*		1*		1*
REPRODUCTIVE TRACT INFECTIONS AND DISORDERS									
VAGINAL BLEEDING PATTERNS									<i>I</i>
a) Irregular pattern <i>without</i> heavy bleeding	1		1		2		2		1
b) Heavy or prolonged bleeding (includes regular and irregular patterns)	1*		1*		2*		2*		2*
UNEXPLAINED VAGINAL BLEEDING (suspicious for serious condition)	2*		2*		2*		3*		
Before evaluation									<i>I</i>
									<i>C</i>
									4*
									2*
									4*
									2*
ENDOMETRIOSIS	1		1		1		1		2
BENIGN OVARIAN TUMOURS (including cysts)	1		1		1		1		1

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<i>I</i> = Initiation, <i>C</i> = Continuation								
SEVERE DYSMENORRHOEA	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1
TROPHOBLAST DISEASE								
a) Benign gestational trophoblastic disease	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3
b) Malignant gestational trophoblastic disease	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	4
CERVICAL ECTROPION	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
CERVICAL INTRAEPITHELIAL NEOPLASIA (CIN)	2	2	2	1	2	2	1	2
CERVICAL CANCER (awaiting treatment)	2	2	2	1	2	2	I : C 4 : 2	I : C 4 : 2
BREAST DISEASE								
a) Undiagnosed mass	2*	2*	2*	2*	2*	2*	1	2
b) Benign breast disease	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
c) Family history of cancer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
d) Cancer								
(i) current	4	4	4	4	4	4	1	4
(ii) past and no evidence of current disease for 5 years	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	3
ENDOMETRIAL CANCER	1	1	1	1	1	1	I : C 4 : 2	I : C 4 : 2
OVARIAN CANCER	1	1	1	1	1	1	I : C 3 : 2	I : C 3 : 2
UTERINE FIBROIDS								
a) Without distortion of the uterine cavity	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
b) With distortion of the uterine cavity	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	4
ANATOMICAL ABNORMALITIES								
a) That distort the uterine cavity							4	4
b) That do not distort the uterine cavity							2	2

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SUMMARY TABLES										
CONDITION	COC	CIC	P/R	POP	DMPA NET-EN	LNG/ ETG Implants	Cu-IUD		LNG-IUD	
<i>I</i> = Initiation, <i>C</i> = Continuation										
PELVIC INFLAMMATORY DISEASE (PID)										
a) Past PID (assuming no current risk factors of STIs)							<i>I</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>C</i>
(i) with subsequent pregnancy	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
(ii) without subsequent pregnancy	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
b) PID - current	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	2*	4	2*
STIs							<i>I</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>C</i>
a) Current purulent cervicitis or chlamydial infection or gonorrhoea	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	2*	4	2*
b) Other STIs (excluding HIV and hepatitis)	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
c) Vaginitis (including trichomonas vaginalis and bacterial vaginosis)	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
d) Increased risk of STIs	1	1	1	1	1	1	2/3*	2	2/3*	2
HIV/AIDS										
HIGH RISK OF HIV							<i>I</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>C</i>
	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
HIV-INFECTED	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	2	2
AIDS	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	3	2*	3	2*
Clinically well on ARV therapy	See ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY below						2	2	2	2
OTHER INFECTIONS										
SCHISTOSOMIASIS										
a) Uncomplicated	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
b) Fibrosis of the liver	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
TUBERCULOSIS							<i>I</i>	<i>C</i>	<i>I</i>	<i>C</i>
a) Non-pelvic	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1	1
b) Known pelvic	1*	1*	1*	1	1	1	4	3	4	3
MALARIA	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

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<i>I = Initiation, C = Continuation</i>								
ENDOCRINE CONDITIONS								
DIABETES								
a) History of gestational disease	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
b) Non-vascular disease								
(i) non-insulin dependent	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
(ii) insulin dependent	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
c) Nephropathy/ retinopathy/ neuropathy	3/4*	3/4*	3/4*	2	3	2	1	2
d) Other vascular disease or diabetes of >20 years' duration	3/4*	3/4*	3/4*	2	3	2	1	2
THYROID DISORDERS								
a) Simple goitre	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
b) Hyperthyroid	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
c) Hypothyroid	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
GASTROINTESTINAL CONDITIONS								
GALL-BLADDER DISEASE								
a) Symptomatic								
(i) treated by cholecystectomy	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
(ii) medically treated	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	2
(iii) current	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	2
b) Asymptomatic	2	2	2	2	2	2	1	2
HISTORY OF CHOLESTASIS								
a) Pregnancy-related	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1
b) Past COC-related	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	2
VIRAL HEPATITIS								
a) Active	4	3/4*	4*	3	3	3	1	3
c) Carrier	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
CIRRHOSIS								
a) Mild (compensated)	3	2	3	2	2	2	1	2
b) Severe (decompensated)	4	3	4	3	3	3	1	3

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CONDITION	COC	CIC	P/R	POP	DMPA NET-EN	LNG/ ETG Implants	Cu-IUD		LNG-IUD	
<i>I</i> = Initiation, <i>C</i> = Continuation										
LIVER TUMOURS										
a) Benign (adenoma)	4	3	4	3	3	3	1		3	
b) Malignant (hepatoma)	4	3/4	4	3	3	3	1		3	
ANAEMIAS										
THALASSAEMIA	1	1	1	1	1	1	2		1	
SICKLE CELL DISEASE	2	2	2	1	1	1	2		1	
IRON-DEFICIENCY ANAEMIA	1	1	1	1	1	1	2		1	
DRUG INTERACTIONS										
DRUGS WHICH AFFECT LIVER ENZYMES										
a) Rifampicin	3*	2*	3*	3*	2*	3*	1		1	
b) Certain anticonvulsants (phenytoin, carbamazepine, barbiturates, primidone, topiramate, oxcarbazepine)	3*	2*	3*	3*	2	3	1		1	
ANTIBIOTICS (excluding rifampicin)										
a) Griseofulvin	2	1	2	2	1	2	1		1	
b) Other antibiotics	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1	
ANTIRETROVIRAL THERAPY										
	2*	2*	2*	2*	2*	2*	I 2/3*	C 2	I 2/3*	C 2

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