

## Contraception and [Product Name] Use.

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[Product Name] is considered as an effective medication for treating HIV. However, some studies have shown that dolutegravir-based antiretroviral therapy (ART) such as [Product Name] can cause **severe birth defects in babies born to mothers taking dolutegravir-based ART.**

It is vital that you do not start a dolutegravir-based ART such as [Product Name] if you are pregnant, may be looking to become pregnant during treatment. This means that you will need to have at least one negative pregnancy test just before starting treatment. Your doctor or any other healthcare professional (HCP) such as a nurse or pharmacist may require you to have a pregnancy test each month during your treatment.

**You must use at least one effective method of contraception, for 1 month before starting treatment and throughout the treatment period** The most highly effective methods include contraceptive injections, implants, intra-uterine devices with copper or hormone and combined contraceptive pills and patches when used carefully. Preferably you should use **two methods of contraception including a barrier method such as the male condom, as no method is 100% safe on its own.** Barrier methods on their own are not recommended. It is vital that both you and your sexual partner understand the importance of this and what the consequences may be if you become pregnant whilst on [Product Name]. Contraception must be used even if you are not currently sexually active, unless in your doctor's opinion there are reasons for assuming that there is no risk of pregnancy.

This leaflet discusses the different types of contraception, how to use them and how effective they may be. Any method of contraception, however effective, may fail, and **by using two methods at once you will minimise the risk of pregnancy.**

**This leaflet is intended as an aid only- it won't replace medical advice given by a healthcare professional. You will need to discuss your contraceptive options with your doctor or nurse before you begin treatment with [Product Name].**

## Your guide to Contraception Use.

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There are many different contraceptive methods available and different methods suit people at different times of their lives. This leaflet is here to help you and your partner to decide on the method of contraception most suited for the both of you. It shows all the available methods, explains how they work, how effective they are and their main advantages and disadvantages. You can ask your HCP for more information on any method you are interested in.

Most contraceptives need to be prescribed. If your HCP, clinic or hospital does not provide all the methods, they should be able to inform you of a place that does. Many sexual health clinics offer contraception. You can buy male condoms and spermicides without going to a doctor or clinic. Spermicides on their own are not recommended as a reliable contraceptive.

## Methods of Contraception

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### Contraceptive injection:

Effectiveness

Over 99% effective.

How it works:

Releases the hormone progestogen slowly into the body. This stops ovulation and thickens cervical mucus to prevent sperm meeting an egg.

Advantages:

- Lasts for 12 weeks (Depo-Provera) or 8 weeks (Noristerat).
- May protect against cancer of the womb and some protection from pelvic inflammatory disease.

Disadvantages:

- Periods may be irregular or stop.
- Regular periods and fertility may take a year or more to return after stopping the injections.
- Some women gain weight.
- Other possible side-effects include headaches, acne, mood changes and tender breasts.

Comments:

The injection cannot be removed from the body so any side-effects may continue for as long as it works and for some time afterwards.

### Implant:

Effectiveness

Over 99% effective.

How it works:

Small flexible tube placed under the skin of the inner upper arm. Releases the hormone progestogen into the bloodstream to stop ovulation and thickens cervical mucus to prevent sperm meeting an egg.

Advantages:

- Works for three years but can be taken out at any time.
- When the implant is removed normal level of fertility will return immediately.

Disadvantages:

- Periods are often irregular, very long or stop for at least the first year.
- Some women gain weight.
- Other possible side-effects include headaches, acne, mood changes and tender breasts.

Comments:

Implant is usually put in under a local anaesthetic and no stitches are needed. The area may be tender for a day or two with bruising and some swelling. Most women can feel the implant with their fingers, but it can't be seen. Minor surgery necessary to take the implant out.

## Brochure on Contraception for Women of Childbearing Age

- Suitable for healthy non-smokers up to the menopause.

### Disadvantages:

- Not suitable for all women.
- Rare but serious side-effects may include blood clots (thrombosis), breast cancer and cervical cancer.
- Can be temporary minor side-effects.
- Not suitable for smokers over 35.

### Comments:

Not effective if taken over 12 hours late or after vomiting or severe diarrhoea. Some drugs or herbal medicines such as St John's wort have been known to stop the pill from working.

### The contraceptive patch [Evra contraceptive patch]:

#### Effectiveness

Over 99% effective when used correctly and according to the instructions.

#### How it works:

A constant daily dose of hormones are released into the bloodstream through the skin. Its main action is the same as the combined oral contraceptive pill; it stops the ovaries from releasing an egg each month during ovulation.

#### Advantages:

- You don't have to remember to take it every day; you only have to remember to replace the patch once each week.
- As the hormones do not need to be absorbed by the stomach, they are not affected by vomiting or diarrhoea.

#### Disadvantages:

- It may be visible.
- For a small number of women it may cause skin irritation.
- Side-effects are similar to those seen with combined oral contraceptive pill.

#### Comments:

Some drugs or herbal medicines such as St John's wort may stop the patch from working. Women who are unable to use the combined oral contraceptive pill cannot use the patch. The effectiveness of the patch is reduced in women who weigh 90kg or over. Patch users should not smoke.

### Progestogen-only pill (POP):

#### Effectiveness

Over 99% effective when used correctly and according to the instructions.

#### How it works:

The hormone progestogen, taken at the same time each day, thickens cervical mucus to prevent sperm meeting an egg or an egg settling in the womb. In some women it prevents ovulation.

#### Advantages:

- Useful for older women who smoke or who cannot use the combined pill.