

Issue 17
January 2017

Safety

Contraceptives

Combined Hormonal Contraceptives: Not Recommended in Female Patients with a History of Venous or Arterial Thromboembolism

During the first two months of OptimiseRx software being activated in practices, 221 messages were triggered when a combined hormonal contraceptive was prescribed to a woman with a history of venous or arterial thromboembolism. **84% of these warning messages were rejected.**

Prescribers are reminded that OptimiseRx delivers PATIENT SPECIFIC safety warnings based on CODED INFORMATION in the patient's clinical record.

UK Medical Eligibility for Contraceptive Use (2016) rates history of VTE as category 4; **A condition which represents an unacceptable health risk if the method (COC) is used.** <http://www.fsrh.org/standards-and-guidance/uk-medical-eligibility-criteria-for-contraceptive-use/>.

Safer methods of contraception, rating 2 or below (benefit outweighs risk or no restriction on use) should be prescribed instead of COC for women with history of VTE.

Where can I find.....?

Back issues of Think Medicines! Safety can be found at <http://members.cambridgeshireandpeterboroughccg.nhs.uk/primary-care/Medicines-Management/safety.htm>.

Up to date information on management of CDs, including signposts to clinical training can be found at <http://members.cambridgeshireandpeterboroughccg.nhs.uk/primary-care/Medicines-Management/controlled-drugs.htm>.

Levonorgestrel-Containing Emergency Hormonal Contraception: Advice on Interactions with Hepatic Enzyme Inducers and Contraceptive Efficacy

The September issue of [MHRA Drug Safety Update](#) included guidance on reduced contraceptive efficacy of oral emergency hormonal contraception "the morning after pill".

Women seeking emergency contraception who are currently taking medicines to treat any of the following conditions or have used one in the last four weeks:

- Epilepsy;
- Tuberculosis;
- HIV;
- Fungal infections;
- or herbal remedies containing St John's Wort

should:

- preferably use a non-hormonal emergency contraceptive, i.e. a copper intrauterine device.
- If this is not an option, double the usual dose of levonorgestrel from 1.5 milligrams to 3 milligrams (two packs) (unlicensed dose - community pharmacy may only sell one pack).

Enzyme-inducing medicines: exposure during pregnancy

Exposure during pregnancy to some of the enzyme-inducing medicines listed above has been associated with an increased risk of birth defects (see the summary of product characteristics for the specific medicine for more).

Patient information sheet can be found [here](#).

