

Quick Reference Chart for the WHO Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use – to initiate or continue use of combined oral contraceptives (COCs), depot-medroxyprogesterone acetate (DMPA), progestin-only implants, copper intrauterine device (Cu-IUCD)

CONDITION		COC	DMPA	Implants	Cu-IUCD
Pregnancy		NA	NA	NA	
Breastfeeding	Less than 6 weeks postpartum				
	6 weeks to < 6 months postpartum				NC
	6 months postpartum or more				
Postpartum	Less than 21 days, non-breastfeeding				NC
	< 48 hours including immediate post-placental				
	≥ 48 hours to less than 4 weeks	NC	NC	NC	
	Puerperal sepsis				
Postabortion					
Smoking	Immediate post-septic				
	Age ≥ 35 years, < 15 cigarettes/day				
Multiple risk factors for cardiovascular disease					
Hypertension	Age ≥ 35 years, ≥ 15 cigarettes/day				
	History of (where BP cannot be evaluated)				
	BP is controlled and can be evaluated				
	Elevated BP (systolic 140 - 159 or diastolic 90 - 99)				
	Elevated BP (systolic ≥ 160 or diastolic ≥ 100)				
Deep venous thrombosis (DVT) and pulmonary embolism (PE)	Vascular disease				
	History of DVT/PE				
	Acute DVT/PE				
	DVT/PE, established on anticoagulant therapy				
Known thrombogenic mutations					
Ischemic heart disease (current or history of) or stroke (history of)				I	C
Known hyperlipidemias					
Complicated valvular heart disease					
Systemic lupus erythematosus	Major surgery with prolonged immobilization				
	Positive or unknown antiphospholipid antibodies				
	Severe thrombocytopenia			I	C
Immunosuppressive treatment					I
Headaches	Immunosuppressive treatment				C
	Non-migrainous (mild or severe)	I	C		
	Migraine without aura (age < 35 years)	I	C		
	Migraine without aura (age ≥ 35 years)	I	C		
Migraines with aura (at any age)			I	C	I
Vaginal bleeding patterns	Unexplained bleeding (prior to evaluation)				I
	Irregular without heavy bleeding				C
	Heavy or prolonged, regular and irregular				

- **Category 1** There are no restrictions for use.
- **Category 2** Generally use; some follow-up may be needed.
- **Category 3** Usually not recommended; clinical judgment and continuing access to clinical services are required for use.
- **Category 4** The method should not be used.

Unlike previous versions of the MEC Quick Reference Chart, this version includes a complete list of all conditions classified as Category 3 and 4 by WHO.

I/C (Initiation/Continuation): A woman may fall into either one category or another, depending on whether she is initiating or continuing to use a method. For example, a client with current PID who wants to initiate IUCD use would be considered as Category 4, and should not have an IUCD inserted. However, if she develops PID while using the IUCD, she would be considered as Category 2. This means she could generally continue using the IUCD and be treated for PID with the IUCD in place. Where I/C is not marked, the category is the same for initiation and continuation.

NA (not applicable): Women who are pregnant do not require contraception.

NC (not classified): The condition is not part of the WHO classification for this method.

* Evaluation of an undiagnosed mass should be pursued as soon as possible.

** Anticonvulsants include: phenytoin, carbamazepine, barbiturates, primidone, topiramate, oxcarbazepine, and lamotrigine. Lamotrigine is a category 1 for implants.

CONDITION		COC	DMPA	Implants	Cu-IUCD
Gestational trophoblastic disease	Regressing or undetectable β-hCG levels				
	Persistently elevated β-hCG levels or malignant disease				
Cancers	Cervical (awaiting treatment)				I
	Endometrial				C
	Ovarian				I
Breast disease	Past w/ no evidence of current disease for 5 yrs				
	Undiagnosed mass	*	*	*	
	Current cancer				
Uterine distortion due to fibroids or anatomical abnormalities					
STIs/PID	Very high individual risk of exposure to STIs				I
	Current purulent cervicitis, chlamydia, gonorrhoea				C
	Vaginitis				
	Current pelvic inflammatory disease (PID)				I
	Other STIs (excluding HIV/hepatitis)				C
	Increased risk of STIs				
Pelvic tuberculosis					I
Diabetes	Diabetes				C
	Non-vascular disease				
Vascular disease or diabetes for > 20 years					
Symptomatic gall bladder disease (current or medically treated)					
Cholestasis (history of)	Related to pregnancy				
	Related to oral contraceptives				
Hepatitis	Acute or flare	I	C		
	Chronic or client is a carrier				
Cirrhosis	Mild				
	Severe				
Liver tumors (hepatocellular adenoma and malignant hepatoma)					
HIV	High risk of HIV or HIV-infected				
AIDS	No antiretroviral therapy (ARV)				I
	Clinically well on ARV therapy				C
	Not clinically well on ARV therapy				I
Drug interactions, including use of:	see drug interactions				
	see drug interactions				
	Nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors				
	Non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors				
	Ritonavir, ritonavir-boosted protease inhibitors				
Rifampicin or rifabutin					
Anticonvulsant therapy**					