

Medicines Optimisation

Prescribing Memo

Combined Hormonal Contraceptives: Updated Information on Thromboembolism Risk

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Main Points

On 22nd January 2014 the MHRA wrote to Doctors to inform them of the results of a recent Europe-wide review and the latest evidence on the risk of thromboembolism in association with combined hormonal contraceptives (CHCs).

The review concluded that:

- the risk of blood clots with all CHCs is small (updated progestogen-specific estimates of VTE incidence are provided in the annex 1 of the link below).
- there is good evidence that the risk of VTE may vary between products, depending on the progestogen used.
- CHCs that contain levonorgestrel, norethisterone or norgestimate have the lowest risk of VTE
- prescribers and women should be aware of the major risk factors for thromboembolism (such as older age, obesity, prolonged immobilisation, surgery, personal history of thromboembolism, smoking etc) and of the key signs and symptoms (these can be found in the table in Annex 4 of the link below)

The link below also provides:

- The original MHRA correspondence
- A prescribing checklist that may be used during a CHC consultation
- A user information card and
- A more-detailed information sheet that you may want to pass to women to read or to help in your consultation with them.

For more information, and links to the annexes mentioned in this memo, please see:

<https://www.cas.dh.gov.uk/ViewAndAcknowledgment/viewAlert.aspx?AlertID=102106>