

**Table 1: Hormonal contraceptive types, failure rates, risks and additional indications**

Type and components	Trade names	First year failure rate* (%)	Advantages/additional indications	Disadvantages/potential side effects/risks
<b>Combined oral</b>		Typical use: 8 Perfect use: 0.3	Highly effective, easily reversible contraception. Non-contraceptive health benefits (e.g. reduced risk of ovarian and endometrial cancer, benign breast disease, etc)	Dosing: Must be taken daily regardless of frequency of intercourse (see also <i>Adverse effects</i> , page 3)
Ethinylloestradiol/levonorgestrel	Levlen, Loette, Logynon, Microgynon series, Microlevlen, Monofeme, Nordette, Trifeme, Triphasil, Triquilar		Loette: indicated for moderate acne	—
Ethinylloestradiol/gestodene	Femoden, Minulet		Less androgenic than levonorgestrel formulation	Increased risk of venous thromboembolism
Ethinylloestradiol/desogestrel	Marvelon 28		Less androgenic than levonorgestrel formulation	Increased risk of venous thromboembolism
Ethinylloestradiol/cyproterone acetate†	Brenda-35, Diane-35, Estelle-35, Juliet-35		Anti-androgenic: only indicated for severe acne or moderate hirsutism†	Increased risk of venous thromboembolism
Ethinylloestradiol/norethisterone	Brevinor, Improvil 28 Day, Norimin, Synphasic		—	—
Ethinylloestradiol/drospirenone	Yasmin		Anti-androgenic: indicated for moderate acne	Potential for hyperkalaemia in women with renal impairment or those taking potassium-sparing drugs; limited data on venous thromboembolism risk.
Ethinylloestradiol/dienogest	Valette		Anti-androgenic: indicated for moderate acne	
Mestranol/norethisterone	Norinyl-1		—	—
<b>Progestogen only oral</b>		Typical use‡: 8 Perfect use‡: 0.3	—	Dosing: Must be taken at approximately the same time each day regardless of frequency of intercourse
Levonorgestrel	Microlut			
Norethisterone	Locilan 28 Day, Micronor, Noriday 28			
<b>Emergency oral</b> , levonorgestrel	Levonelle-2, NorLevo, Postinor-2	[see footnote]‡	Emergency contraception, ideally to be used within 72 hours (but up to 120 hours) of unprotected sex	Nausea, vomiting (rare)
<b>Implant</b> , etonogestrel	Implanon	Typical use§: 0.05 Perfect use§: 0.05	Duration of action: effective for 3 years	Minor surgical procedure needed to implant or remove; not recommended for concomitant use with enzyme-inducing drugs; menstrual disturbances, amenorrhoea; acne
<b>Injection</b> , medroxyprogesterone acetate	Depo-Provera, Depo-Ralovera	Typical use: 3 Perfect use: 0.3	Duration of action: effective for 3 months	Delay in return to fertility (average 6 months); menstrual disturbances, amenorrhoea; weight gain; may be associated with a largely reversible loss in bone mineral density. Black box warning by US FDA and WHO-MEC Category 2** for < 18 and > 45 year olds based on bone mineral density effects
<b>Intrauterine device</b> , levonorgestrel-releasing	Mirena	Typical use: 0.1 Perfect use: 0.1	Duration of action: effective for 5 years. Additional indication: idiopathic menorrhagia	Menstrual disturbances, amenorrhoea; expulsion; perforation of uterus; pain; acne
<b>Vaginal ring</b> , ethinylloestradiol/etonogestrel-releasing	NuvaRing	Typical use¶: 8 Perfect use¶: 0.3	Duration of action: ring remains in vagina for 3 weeks then removed for 1 week. Inserted and removed by user	Vaginal discharge, vaginitis, irritation. User must remember to remove, and re-insert after ring-free week  Limited data on venous thromboembolism risk

\* % of women experiencing an unintended pregnancy in the first year of use.<sup>57</sup>

† Not indicated for contraception alone.

‡ Estimated 85% reduction in risk of pregnancy after a single act of unprotected sex

§ Figures based on levonorgestrel implant (Norplant), which is not available in Australia.

¶ Based on combined data for combined oral contraceptive and progestogen-only pills. The effectiveness of the progestogen-only pill may be lower as it is less likely to be taken perfectly. There are no data for the vaginal ring — it is assumed that it is no less effective than oral contraceptives.

\*\* WHO Medical Eligibility Criteria Category 2: A condition where the advantages of using the method generally outweigh the theoretical or proven risks.<sup>10</sup>