



Press Release

For Immediate Release
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CDC Issues the First Set of U.S. Recommendations for Health Care Professionals on Contraceptive Safety

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) is issuing a set of recommendations for U.S. health care professionals to use when providing family planning counseling and services. The [U. S. Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use](#), 2010, provides guidance on whether women and men with particular medical conditions or physical characteristics can safely use certain methods of contraception.

The guidance provides recommendations for situations such as whether women with [high blood pressure](#) have increased health risks, such as blood clots, if they use oral contraceptives and whether teenagers have increased health risks, such as bone loss, if they use injectable contraception.

“Based on scientific evidence and expert opinion, women of reproductive age with chronic diseases and other medical conditions can safely use most methods of contraception,” said Dr. Kathryn Curtis, an author of the recommendations.

CDC adapted these recommendations from global guidance developed by the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#). In addition to the medical conditions included by the WHO, CDC also developed recommendations for medical conditions that many women in this country might experience. Examples of additional conditions in the U.S. version of the guidance include [rheumatoid arthritis](#), history of weight-loss surgery, and solid organ transplantation.

The publication comes after a formal process involving systematic review of the scientific evidence and translation of the evidence into recommendations by experts in family planning, obstetrics and gynecology, and



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other specialties, including many CDC partners in reproductive health. The published recommendations appear in an issue of [MMWR Recommendations and Reports](#), released on May 28, 2010. The recommendations will be updated on a regular basis to reflect new published evidence.

Safe and effective use of contraception is important because approximately half of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended; and an [unintended pregnancy](#) can have negative effects for the mother and the infant. For women who have a medical condition, contraceptive choice may be more complicated but critically important to reduce health risks from unintended pregnancy. This guidance helps provide a framework for these women to work with their health care provider to choose safe and effective contraception.

“This is an excellent source of clinical guidance; however, as always, health care providers should consider the individual clinical circumstances of each person to find an appropriate contraceptive method,” according to Dr. Curtis.

The report states that, in addition to safety, many other factors, such as effectiveness, availability, acceptability, and personal preference, should be considered in determining the most appropriate contraceptive method. Women and men seeking contraception should talk with their health care provider about the full range of contraceptive options to assess which contraceptive methods can best meet their needs and provide optimal protection from unplanned pregnancy.

The recommendations are available on the CDC MMWR website (www.cdc.gov/mmwr). A related CDC website will provide updates and supporting information to clinicians as needed: (<http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/UnintendedPregnancy/USMEC.htm>).

The World Health Organization’s programs and materials are found at http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/family_planning/9241562668index/en/index.html



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