

Dec. 3, 2013



Study: Plan B may not work for overweight women

Article reprinted from CNN.com.

By **Jacque Wilson**, CNN
Nov. 26, 2013

An emergency contraceptive manufactured in Europe will come with a new label in 2014, warning that the pill may not be effective for women over a certain weight.

The same may be true for emergency contraceptives in the United States.

French manufacturer HRA Pharma was conducting research on another topic related to its emergency contraceptive Norlevo when scientists realized there was "a clear impact of weight" on the drug's effectiveness, CEO Erin Gainer said.

HRA Pharma scientists discovered Norlevo began losing its effectiveness when women reach about 75 kilograms, or 165 pounds, Gainer said, and showed an "absence of effectiveness" at about 80 kilograms, or about 176 pounds.

"We felt it was our ethical duty ... to report those results to our health authorities here in Europe," Gainer said.

Norlevo is identical to the emergency contraceptive Plan B One-Step, said Kelly Cleland, a public health expert at Princeton University. Both are LNG ECs, or emergency contraceptives that include levonorgestrel, a synthetic version of the hormone progestogen. Emergency contraceptives are often called the morning-after pill because they work by interfering with

ovulation, preventing the fertilization of an egg.

Teva Pharmaceuticals, which manufactures Plan B, did not respond to CNN's request for comment.

The Food and Drug Administration "is currently reviewing the available and related scientific information on this issue, including the publication upon which the Norlevo labeling change was based," said spokeswoman Erica Jefferson. "The agency will then determine what, if any, labeling changes to emergency contraceptives are warranted."

Plan B is available in the United States without a prescription to anyone of any age.

European health authorities approved the Norlevo label change a few weeks ago, but it will take several months to implement in all the countries HRA Pharma supplies, Gainer said. The new packaging slip will say the emergency contraceptive is "not

recommended ... if you weigh (165 pounds) or more," according to Mother Jones, which first reported the story.

It is unclear why emergency contraceptives may be less effective for overweight women, said Anna Glasier, an expert in reproductive medicine at the University of Edinburgh. Glasier published a study in 2011 that analyzed the risk of pregnancy for women who had taken emergency contraception. Glasier and her colleagues found that obese women had three times the risk of getting pregnant after taking emergency contraception than those with a normal body weight. The risk was greater for those who had taken levonorgestrel pills, compared with those who had taken ulipristal acetate, which is used in another emergency contraceptive called Ella.



December clinics

Wednesday, June 4
5-7 p.m.
Dr. Tyler Adam

Thursday, Dec. 5
11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.
Barb Peckham, CNM

Wednesday, Dec. 11
5-7 p.m.
Dr. Todd Pankratz

Thursday, Dec. 12
11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.
Barb Peckham CNM

Tuesday, Dec. 17
5-7 p.m.
Males Only
Dr. Daniel Leonard

Wednesday, Dec. 18
11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Barb Peckham, CNM

Thursday, Dec. 19
11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m.
Barb Peckham, CNM

Hastings Family Planning will be closed Dec. 25 and 26 for the Christmas holiday. We also will be closed Jan. 1 for New Year's Day.



Birth control option of the month: shot or injection

The birth control shot is an injection of the hormone progestin that prevents pregnancy by keeping the ovaries from releasing eggs. The shot also works by causing the cervical mucus to thicken, which blocks sperm from meeting with and fertilizing an egg. The most commonly used injectable contraceptive is Depo-Provera, sometimes called Depo.

A healthcare provider gives the birth control shot. Each shot lasts for 12 weeks (about three months). It is important to get each shot on time, otherwise pregnancy may occur.

Of 100 women who use this method, 6 may get pregnant. This includes women who did not get the shot on time. The risk is lower in women who get their shots on time.

Advantages of the shot:

- The shot does not require the consent of the female's partner and is private.
- The shot is safe and works well in preventing pregnancy.
- Using the shot means you do not have to think about birth control when you want to have sex.
- Many women who use the birth control shot have lighter periods or no periods at all

and fewer menstrual cramps.

- Women who take the shot are less likely to have cancer of the uterus and pelvic inflammatory disease (PID).

Drawbacks of the shot:

- Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections.
- Requires a visit to a health care provider every 12 weeks.
- It may take up to a year after stopping the shot to become pregnant.
- Some women experience side effects such as breast tenderness, spotting or bleeding between periods, weight gain, nervousness,

abdominal discomfort and/or headaches.

- Using the shot longer than two years continuously may cause thinning of a woman's bones. However, normal bone growth returns when a woman stops taking the birth control shot.

A prescription is required for the Depo Provera shot. At Hastings Family Planning, the cost ranges from \$38 to \$70 every 12 weeks.

Hastings Family Planning

Promotes the well being of families, responsible behavior, and healthy babies.

Prevents unintended pregnancies through education, including abstinence and contraceptive services.

Allows planning and timing of pregnancies.

Remember

We have free latex and non latex male condoms available as well as female condoms and lubricant. We also sell name brand condoms for as low as 25 cents each.

Hastings Family Planning

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