Quick Start Algorithm

Woman requests a new birth control method:

1. Pill, Patch, Ring, Injection

First day of last menstrual period (LMP) is:

≤ 5 days ago

≥ 5 days ago

Urine pregnancy test: negative**

Unprotected sex since LMP:

5 days ago

> 5 days ago

Both < and > 5 days ago

None

Patient wants to start new method now?

Yes

Start pill/patch/ring/injection, use back-up method 1st week

Timing: start new method TODAY even if taking EC today

Two weeks later, urine pregnancy test is negative;** continue pill/patch/ring/injection

No

Give prescription for chosen method; advise patient to use barrier method until next menses

Start pill/patch/ring on 1st day of menses; return for injection within 5 days of menses

* Because hormonal EC is not 100% effective, check urine pregnancy test 2 weeks after EC use.

** If pregnancy test is positive, provide options counseling.

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2. Progestin IUD or Implant

First day of LMP is:

≤ 5 days ago

Insert IUD/implant today

> 5 days ago

Urine pregnancy test: negative**

Unprotected sex since LMP?

yes

Offer pill/patch/ring as bridge to IUD/implant

Patient accepts pill/patch/ring

Two weeks later, urine pregnancy test is negative**

Insert IUD/implant today

Patient declines pill/patch/ring, uses barrier method instead

Insert IUD/implant today

no

Insert IUD/implant today

3. Copper IUD

First day of last menstrual period (LMP) is:

≤ 5 days ago

Insert IUD today

> 5 days ago

Urine pregnancy test: negative**

First episode of unprotected sex since LMP:

≤ 5 days ago

Insert IUD today

> 5 days ago

Insert IUD today

None

* Pill/patch/ring may be started as a bridge to copper IUD.
** If pregnancy test is positive, provide options counseling.

Note: These algorithms are based on the algorithm for injected progestin that appears in the 2005 *Pocket Guide to Managing Contraception* by Hatcher RA, Zieman M et al, page 135.