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NEWS

Supporting women's health

Published: 17 Nov 2021 00:01

Part of: [Health and social care](#)

Temporary contraception available from pharmacies.

Women will be able to access a temporary 3-month supply of the progestogen-only contraceptive pill from community pharmacies.

Also known as the 'mini pill', the national roll-out follows a successful pilot in pharmacies across Lothian and Tayside.

This step will complement existing services currently providing contraception to widen access and bridge the gap between emergency contraception and use of longer term contraception. Patients will be advised to contact their own GP practice or sexual health service for ongoing contraception.

Ensuring women have the support they need to manage and improve their own health, including providing them with a choice of contraceptive options, is central to the Scottish Government's UK-leading Women's Health Plan and is the first step to a Woman's Health and Wellbeing service in community pharmacies.

Minister for Public Health and Women's Health Maree Todd said:

"Our UK-leading Women's Health Plan demonstrates our ambition and determination to see change for women in Scotland, for their health and for their role in society. It's crucial that we recognise the importance of women in society and a key part of this is prioritising the health of women - it has positive impact for us all. We want Scotland to be a world leader when it comes to women's health. The introduction of this service will increase the choice for women in the ways in which they can access contraception.

"I would also like to give recognition to pharmacists and pharmacy teams across Scotland who continue to play a fundamental role in helping patients and the wider NHS team by ensuring people get the right care in the right place despite the additional pressures they face. Further enhancing the service the community pharmacy network offer through bridging contraception demonstrates its valuable role in our communities and in helping to address inequalities in health that women are facing."

Deputy Chief Medical Officer Professor Nicola Steedman said:

"Until now, pharmacies could only supply emergency contraception and then needed to direct women to their GP practice for longer term contraception options. Providing a temporary supply of the progestogen-only pill within pharmacies will give women more choice over their reproductive health therefore reducing the risk of unplanned pregnancy.

"This is not intended to replace existing services providing contraception, but to widen access and bridge the gap between emergency contraception and longer term contraception choices for women.

"Patients will be advised by pharmacy teams to speak to their GP or local sexual and reproductive health service for ongoing contraception after receiving this temporary supply."

Background

Most types of contraception are available for free in the UK. Contraception is free to all women and men through the NHS. Places where you can get contraception include:

- most GP practices – talk to your GP or practice nurse
- sexual health clinics – they also offer contraceptive and STI testing services
- pharmacies – they should be able to give an initial 3-month supply
- some young people's services

This bridging contraception is available to individuals between 13 and 55 years of age, where clinically appropriate.

More information on getting and using [contraception is available on the NHS Inform page](#). [↗](#)

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