

## About this wheel

This wheel contains the medical eligibility criteria for starting use of contraceptive methods. It is based on *Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use, 3rd edition (2004)* and its *2008 Update*, one of WHO's evidence-based guidelines. It tells family planning providers if a woman presenting with a known medical or physical condition is able to use various contraceptive methods safely and effectively.

The wheel includes recommendations on initiating use of six common types of contraceptives:

1. Combined pills (low dose combined oral contraceptives, with  $\leq 35 \mu\text{g}$  ethinylestradiol)
2. Combined injectable contraceptives (Cyclofem and Mesigyna)
3. Progestogen-only pills
4. Progestogen-only injectables, DMPA (a 3-monthly injectable) and NET-EN (a 2-monthly injectable)
5. Progestogen-only implants (Norplant, Jadelle, and Implanon)
6. Copper-bearing IUD

The guidance in the wheel applies to initiation of contraceptive methods. Recommendations for continuation of method use, when a woman develops a medical condition while using the method, can be found in the *Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use* guideline.

## How to use this wheel

The wheel matches up the contraceptive methods, shown on the inner disk, with specific medical conditions shown around the outer rim. The numbers shown in the viewing slot tell you whether the woman who has this known condition is able to start use of the contraceptive method:

- 1 = Yes:** Use the method in any circumstance
- 2 = Yes:** Generally use the method
- 3 = No:** Use of the method is not usually recommended unless other more appropriate methods are not available or acceptable
- 4 = No:** Method NOT to be used

Categories 1 and 4 are clearly defined recommendations. For categories 2 or 3, greater clinical judgement will be needed and careful follow-up may be required. If clinical judgement is limited, categories 1 and 2 both mean the method can be used, and categories 3 and 4 both mean the method should not be used.

**No restrictions for some conditions:** There are many medical conditions when ALL methods can be used (that is, all the methods are either a category 1 or 2). These conditions are listed on the back of the wheel.

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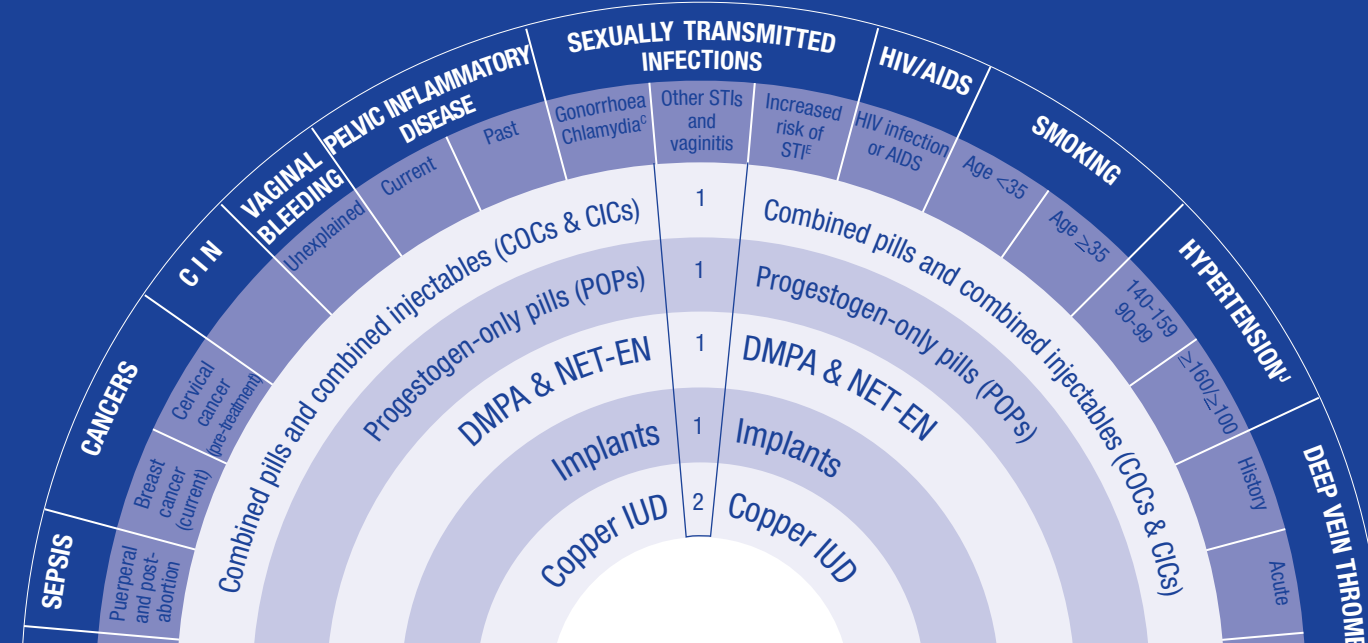
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# MEDICAL ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA WHEEL FOR CONTRACEPTIVE USE

## 2008 UPDATE



## Acknowledgements

The *Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use* and this version of the *Medical Eligibility Criteria Wheel* were developed by the World Health Organization's Department of Reproductive Health and Research. This wheel is based on similar medical eligibility criteria wheels developed independently in Ghana and Jordan. We would like to thank the responsible groups for their innovative work:

- **Ghana:** The Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital, part of the University of Ghana Medical School; and the WHO country office in Ghana. Further technical or financial support was provided by: the Ghana Health Service, UNFPA/Ghana, Gold Fields Ghana Ltd., JHPIEGO, EngenderHealth, WHO/AFRO, USAID, and WHO/Eritrea.
- **Jordan:** The Jordan Health Communication Partnership and the Near East Division, led by the late Dr Alfred Yassa, in the Health Communication Partnership at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/Center for Communication Programs, in collaboration with the Jordan Ministry of Health, and with support from USAID.

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Dr Mario Festin, Dr Mary Lyn Gaffield, and Ms Sarah Johnson were responsible for this *2008 Update*.

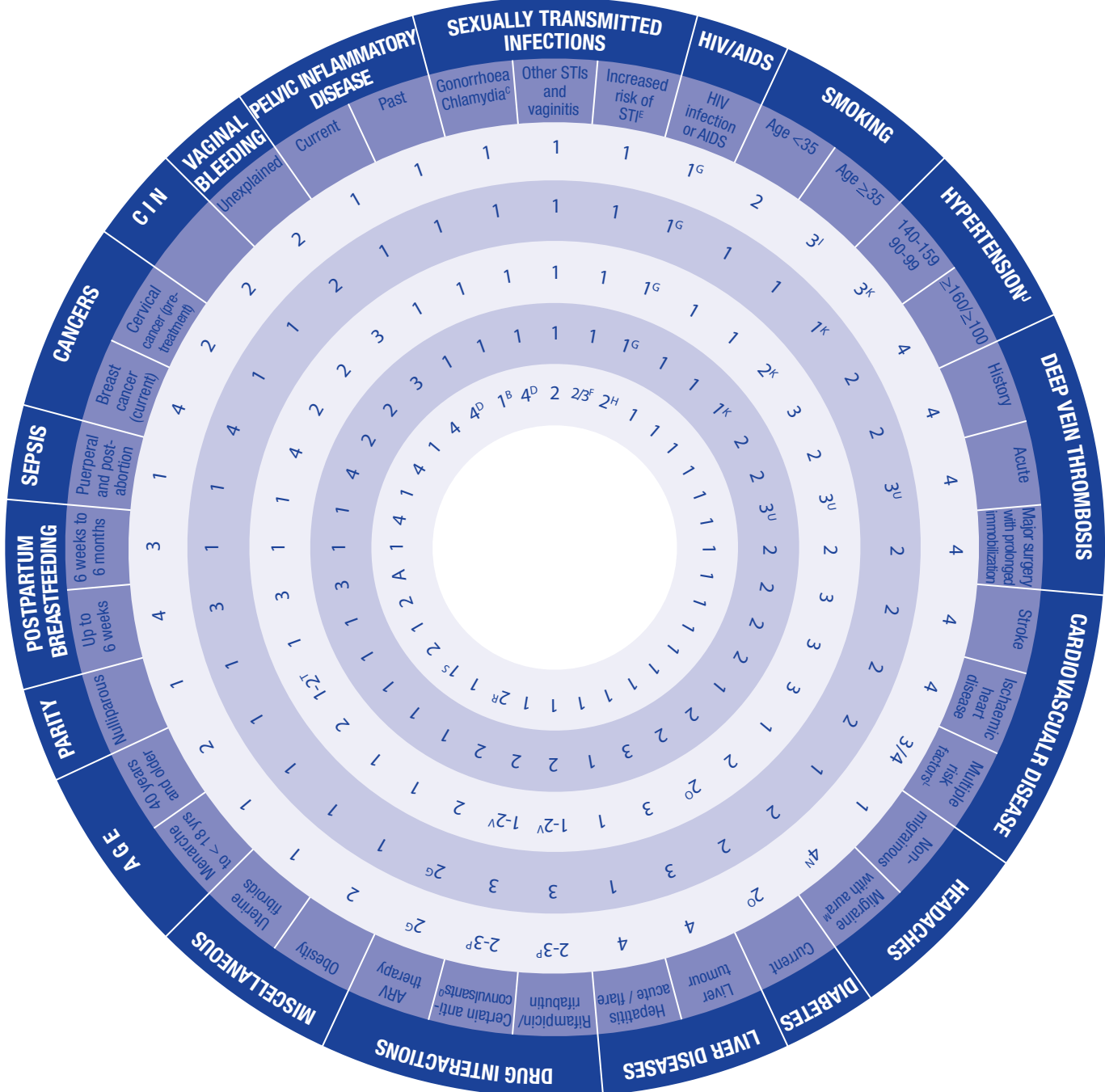
Layout and design: Ms Cath Hamill and Ms Janet Petitpierre.

### Ordering copies and further information

Detailed information on the medical eligibility criteria, including guidance on other contraceptive methods, appears in the *Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use*, 3rd edition, 2004 and the *2008 Update*. This can be accessed at <http://www.who.int/reproductive-health> or copies can be ordered from the address below.

Sample copies of the wheel can be ordered from:  
Documentation Centre  
Department of Reproductive Health and Research  
World Health Organization  
1211 Geneva 27  
Switzerland  
Fax: +41 22 791 4189. Phone: +41 22 791 4447.  
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### Conditions that are category 1 and 2 for all methods (method can be used)

Age 18–39	High risk for HIV	Schistosomiasis (bilharzia)
Anaemias, including sickle-cell disease and thalassaemia	History of gestational diabetes	Surgery without prolonged immobilization
Benign ovarian tumors, including cysts	History of high blood pressure during pregnancy	Taking antibiotics (excluding rifampicin/rifabutin)
Breast disease: family history, benign breast disease and undiagnosed mass	History of pelvic surgery, including caesarean section	Thyroid disorders
Depression	Irregular, heavy or prolonged menstrual bleeding	Tuberculosis (but if pelvic, cannot use IUD)
Dysmenorrhoea	Malaria	Uncomplicated valvular heart disease
Endometriosis	Mild cirrhosis	Varicose veins
Epilepsy	Past ectopic pregnancy	Viral hepatitis (carrier or chronic)
	Post-abortion (no sepsis)	

### Notes to the conditions

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>A</b> Can insert copper IUD < 48 hrs after delivery or $\geq$ 4 weeks.   | <b>M</b> To check if migraine has aura, ask: "Do you see a bright spot in your vision before bad headaches?"                             |
| <b>B</b> If she had no subsequent pregnancy, IUD = 2.   | <b>N</b> Migraine without aura and < 35 years old, COCs and CICs = 2.  |
| <b>C</b> Or other forms of purulent cervicitis.   | <b>N</b> Migraine without aura and $\geq$ 35 years old, COCs and CICs = 3.   |
| <b>D</b> If she develops this condition while using the IUD, she can keep using it during treatment.                  | <b>O</b> For complicated diabetes, or having diabetes for more than 20 years, COCs, CICs, DMPA and NET-EN = 3–4.                         |
| <b>E</b> If at increased risk of STIs or HIV, advise condom use.  | <b>P</b> COCs = 3; CICs = 2.   |
| <b>F</b> If very high likelihood of exposure to gonorrhoea or chlamydia = 3.  | <b>Q</b> Phenytoin, carbamazepine, barbiturates, primidone, topiramate, oxcarbazepine. For lamotrigine COCs/CICs = 3. Other methods = 1. |
| <b>G</b> If on ARV Therapy = 2, except ritonavir-boosted ARVs = 3.  | <b>R</b> If she is not clinically well, IUD = 3.   |
| <b>H</b> AIDS, but not clinically well on ARV Therapy = 3 for insertion.  | <b>S</b> If the uterine cavity is distorted, cannot use IUD.   |
| <b>I</b> COCs and heavy smoking = 4. CICs and light smoking = 2.  | <b>T</b> > 45 yrs. = 2.  |
| <b>J</b> If blood pressure cannot be measured, and she has no known history of hypertension, all methods can be used. | <b>U</b> If established on anticoagulant therapy = 2.  |
| <b>K</b> The same category applies to controlled hypertension.  | <b>V</b> DMPA = 1; NET-EN = 2.   |
| <b>L</b> Risk factors include: older age, smoking, diabetes, hypertension.  |  |

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