

6 August 2020

Contraceptive shortages: clinician update

New Zealand is facing ongoing contraceptive supply challenges, which impacts the contraceptives that are available in the short and long term.

PHARMAC is providing regular updates to the health sector about the situation on its [website](#). There is more information below for clinicians.

Most of the shortages are for oral contraceptives (the pill). There have been difficulties with the supply of the following oral contraceptives:

- Marvelon (being discontinued)
- Microlut (shortages)
- Norimin/Necon (shortages)

PHARMAC has advised that there are also supply issues with:

- Brevinor-1 28 day (shortages)

There have previously been concerns about the supply of Depo-Provera, however, stock has just recently arrived in New Zealand.

Information for clinicians:

It is important that clinicians regularly check the PHARMAC [website](#) for updates and also check with local pharmacies to assess stock.

- Marvelon (being discontinued)
Clinicians should recommend a change of pill to clients currently on Marvelon as there will be no further supply.
- Microlut (shortages)
There is an alternative brand of Microlut (Australian) which is available to clients and can be prescribed by all prescribers.
- Norimin (shortages)
Necon is being supplied as a temporary replacement for Norimin as it contains the same active ingredients in the same strength. Necon can now also be prescribed by all prescribers. Pharmacies should be able to supply Necon if a Norimin script is annotated to allow substitution.

- Brevinor-1 28 day (shortages) There is no available hormonally identical preparation so clients will need to change to a different combination if they are not able to access Brevinor-1 28. An alternative with the same hormones but different dosing would be Norimin/Necon, although many clients will have already tried this before Brevinor-1. Other COC options have a different progestogen but would be appropriate to trial.
- When changing someone from one oral contraceptive to another, even if the hormonal combination is the same, the packaging may be different and it is a good opportunity to review the instructions for correct pill taking.
- Depo-Provera.
In the case of Depo-Provera shortages, it can be safely extended to 14 weeks between injections. This may need careful discussion with women who prefer to repeat early due to bleeding.