



*Brands available in India - Saheli and Chhaya

CENTCHROMAN ***Oral Method of*** ***Contraception***

Centchroman



General information

- Centchroman is safe and effective.
- Centchroman is safe for breastfeeding women.
- In the first 3 months, take 2 pills a week.
- After the 1st three months, only 1 pill to be taken once a week.
- No congenital or developmental anomalies have been reported in births in case of contraceptive failure.
- It DOES NOT cause any side effects such as nausea, weight gain, fluid retention, hypertension etc commonly seen with other combined contraceptive pills.
- Centchroman (or 'Ormeloxifene') is a potent non-steroidal non-hormonal birth control method. Although it does not contain hormones, it acts on the hormones produced in the body, especially progesterone
- May cause irregular bleeding during the first few months of use.
- Convenience of infrequent dose, i.e., once a week.
- Quick reversibility of fertility when the use is stopped.
- It is a safe drug with an excellent therapeutic index.
- Has shown potential as a postcoital contraceptive also.
- Safe for a woman with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), even if she takes antiretroviral (ARV) medicines.
- Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.

Effectiveness

- The weekly pill is 98-99% effective and failure rate is 1-2 pregnancies per 100 women.

How the method works

- Also called “once a week pill”
- Centchroman suppresses the receptors in the reproductive organs like the ovaries, uterus and breasts. But it stimulates the oestrogen receptors of other organs like the bones. So, while it acts as a birth control pill, it can prevent breast cancers, uterine cancers and stimulate the formation of new bones.
- Centchroman acts at three points in the reproductive cycle:
 - It increases the movement of the fertilized ovum through the fallopian tubes so that it reaches the uterus too early and the endometrium is not ready for implantation at that time.
 - It increases the rate of maturation of the ovum so that it is hypermature when it reaches the endometrium and fails to implant in it.
 - It slows down the growth and development of the endometrium so that it is not adequately prepared to receive the fertilised ovum when it reaches the uterus.

How to use

- Centchroman is to be taken twice a week for the first 3 months followed by once a week thereafter.
- To begin the use of Centchroman, the woman is advised to take the first pill on the first day of period (which is the first day of bleeding) and the second pill three days later (on 4th day of bleeding). This pattern of days is repeated through the first 3 months.
- Starting from the fourth month, the pill is to be taken once a week on the first pill day and should be continued on the weekly schedule regardless of her menstrual cycle.

Do not use this method if you

- Are at risk of heart disease, stroke, smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol.
- Have liver dysfunction or clinical jaundice.
- Have polycystic ovarian disease (PCOD).
- Have cervical dysplasia (abnormality of development), chronic cervicitis.
- Have hypersensitivity to the drug.
- Have chronic illnesses such as renal disease and tuberculosis (TB).

Important facts:

- It is highly effective.
- It is safe to use. Since Centchroman has no effect on either the ovaries or the uterus, it can be started without a pelvic examination.
- Being non-hormonal, it does not cause the nausea, dizziness, weight gain and other side effects associated with birth control pills.
- With Centchroman use occasionally, the menstrual cycle may get prolonged in some users. The contraceptive make periods lighter and the interval longer which is actually helpful for anaemic women as user loses less amount of blood. However, if periods are delayed for more than 15 days, pregnancy needs to be ruled out.
- It has no adverse effect on blood coagulation, liver function and lipid profile. So there are no chances of blood clots or increase in the cholesterol level due to Centchroman.
- It is not toxic. In women who became pregnant while on Centchroman, no congenital anomalies were noted in the babies.
- It is less expensive than the traditional oestrogen-progesterone pills.
- Since it does not stop ovulation, return to fertility is faster once the pills are stopped.
- Risks of infertility are minimal.

Seek medical help if you

- Have any questions or problems.
- Need more pills.
- Develop any health problems.
- Were late or missed a pill, had sex in the past 53 days, and want to avoid pregnancy.
- Think you may be pregnant



Sources:

- Population Council. The Balanced Counseling Strategy Plus (3rd ed.) [Internet] 2015 [cited 2021 April 06]. Available from: https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2015RH_BCS-Plus_CounselingCards_en.pdf.
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