



Addressing Bleeding Patterns Associated with Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs) to Encourage Continued Use

Consider the following options to support patients experiencing side effects of LARC use to prevent premature removal of the birth control device. If the patient presents prior to 3 months post-placement, let the patient know that irregular bleeding and spotting is normal and do not treat their bleeding aggressively unless there are circumstances requiring immediate removal (see bottom of handout for more information).

Possible Courses of Action (COA) For Patients WITHOUT a Contraindication to Combined Hormonal Contraceptives (CHCs)

COA 1: Combination Birth Control Pills

(for menses control only, at least 30 or 35 mcg of estrogen)

For patients experiencing spotting:

- Provide patient with three-month supply of oral contraceptives and instruct patient to take one pill a day (including the placebo pills) for 3 consecutive months unless their bleeding has stopped by the second month

For patients experiencing heavy bleeding:

- Provide patient with two packs of oral contraceptives and instruct the patient to take 3 pills a day for 2 days, followed by 2 pills a day for 5 days
- Following this week, instruct the patient to start the next pack and take one pill a day for 3 weeks

COA 2: Estrogen

- Option 1: Instruct the patient to take 2 mg of estradiol daily for 7 days
- Option 2: Instruct the patient to take 1.25 mg of conjugated estrogen daily for 7 days

Possible COAs For Patients WITH or WITHOUT a Contraindication to CHCs

COA 1: NSAIDs

- Instruct patient to use Ibuprofen, typically 800 mg 3 times daily with food starting 2 days prior to the start of their menstrual cycle for up to 5 days
- If the Ibuprofen is not effective, instruct the patient to use Naproxen as directed

COA 2: TXA

- Instruct patient to take 2 TXA tabs three times daily at the onset of their monthly cycle for up to 5 days
- Instruct patient to stop taking the TXA once bleeding stops

Circumstances Indicating Necessary Removal

- The patient declines the above interventions and prefers immediate removal
- Any of the above interventions to correct side effects fail to result in the desired effects for the patient
- There are signs of irreversible symptoms such as mood changes and alopecia
- The patient is experiencing pain with the device, as it may be malpositioned (if this is the case, offer to replace the device)

- If the LARC must be removed, direct the patient towards **Decide + Be Ready**, a mobile app designed to help active duty women make decisions regarding contraception given their unique needs as service women
- This app takes into consideration that service women, when deployed or working in uniquely challenging environments, may also choose to use one of the birth control methods to manage or even skip menstrual periods



Scan this Code to Download

