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Long-acting reversible contraceptives good for teens

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(HealthDay)—Long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARC) are

suitable for use by adolescents, according to a Committee Opinion published in the May issue of *Obstetrics & Gynecology*.

Noting that from 2006 to 2010, 82 percent of adolescents at risk of unintended pregnancy were using contraception but only 59 percent used a highly-effective method, researchers from the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists' Committee on Adolescent Health Care address contraception among adolescents.

The researchers note that, compared with short-acting contraceptives, LARC have higher efficacy, continuation rates, and satisfaction rates among adolescents who choose to use them. Complications associated with intrauterine devices and contraceptive implants are rare, with little difference between adolescents and women, indicating that these methods are safe for adolescents. Patients' lack of familiarity with or understanding of these methods, potentially high cost of initiation, lack of access, low parental acceptance, and obstetrician-gynecologists' and other health care providers' misconceptions about LARC safety in adolescents are barriers to LARC use. Obstetrician-gynecologists should continue to follow standard guidelines for sexually transmitted infection (STI) screening because of the increased risk among adolescents. Adolescents who use LARC should be encouraged to use male or female condoms to reduce the risk of STIs.

"Obstetrician-gynecologists should counsel all sexually active adolescents who do not seek pregnancy on the range of reversible contraceptive methods, including LARC, and should help make these contraceptives readily accessible to them," the authors write.

More information: Abstract/Full Text

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