Quick Start Algorithm

Woman requests a new birth control method:

1. Pill, Patch, Ring, Injection

First day of last menstrual period (LMP) is:

≤ 5 days ago

Start method today

> 5 days ago

Urine pregnancy test: negative**

Unprotected sex since LMP:

5 days ago

Offer hormonal EC today*

> 5 days ago

Advise that negative pregnancy test is not conclusive, but hormones will not harm fetus

Both < and > 5 days ago

Offer hormonal EC today*

None

Start pill/patch/ring/injection today, use back-up method 1st week

Patient wants to start new method now?

yes

Start pill/patch/ring/injection; use back-up method 1st week

Timing:
start new method TODAY even if taking EC today

Two weeks later, urine pregnancy test is negative;** continue pill/patch/ring/injection

no

Give prescription for chosen method; advise patient to use barrier method until next menses

Start pill/patch/ring on 1st day of menses; return for injection within 5 days of menses

* Because hormonal EC is not 100% effective, check urine pregnancy test 2 weeks after EC use.

** If pregnancy test is positive, provide options counseling.
2. Progestin IUD or Implant

First day of LMP is:

- **≤ 5 days ago**
  - Insert IUD/implant today
  - Urine pregnancy test: negative**
  - Unprotected sex since LMP?
    - yes
      - Offer pill/patch/ring as bridge to IUD/implant
      - Patient accepts pill/patch/ring: Two weeks later, urine pregnancy test is negative**
      - Insert IUD/implant today
    - no
      - Patient declines pill/patch/ring, uses barrier method instead
      - Insert IUD/implant within 5 days of next menses
  - Patient accepts pill/patch/ring: Two weeks later, urine pregnancy test is negative**
  - Insert IUD/implant today

- **> 5 days ago**

3. Copper IUD

First day of last menstrual period (LMP) is:

- **≤ 5 days ago**
  - Insert IUD today
  - Urine pregnancy test: negative**
  - First episode of unprotected sex since LMP:
    - **≤ 5 days ago**
      - Insert IUD today
    - **> 5 days ago**
      - Insert IUD within 5 days of next menses*
    - None

* Pill/patch/ring may be started as a bridge to copper IUD.
** If pregnancy test is positive, provide options counseling.

Note: These algorithms are based on the algorithm for injected progestin that appears in the 2005 Pocket Guide to Managing Contraception by Hatcher RA, Zieman M et al, page 135. www.RHEDI.org