



Drug FAQs for Members

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Yasmin and the Risk of Blood Clots

Recently, news about the risk of blood clots with the birth control pills Yasmin and Yaz has increased member concerns. Yasmin was approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2001 for the prevention of pregnancy. Yaz, a similar birth control pill with a lower dose of estrogen, was approved by the FDA in 2006.

What is the risk of blood clots with birth control pills?

- All birth control pills that combine hormones (estrogen with a progestin) increase the risk for blood clots in the legs and lung as well as other clotting problems such as strokes and heart attacks.
- The overall risk of blood clots from birth control pills is estimated to be very low, and is less than the risk of blood clots associated with being pregnant:
 - 20-40 cases per 100,000 women taking a typical birth control pill each year
 - 5-10 cases per 100,000 women not taking birth control pills each year
 - 60 cases per 100,000 pregnant women each year
- For women who are starting birth control pills, the risk of blood clots appears to be highest during the first year of use. The risk is mainly due to the dose of estrogen, but other factors such as older age, obesity, and smoking can also increase the risk.

Is the risk of blood clots with Yasmin or Yaz higher than with other birth control pills?

- Yasmin and Yaz contain the progestin hormone called drospirenone. Recent studies suggest this type of progestin may have a higher risk of causing blood clots when compared to other common birth control pills that contain a different progestin hormone. Despite this finding, the overall risk of blood clots with a birth control pill that contains drospirenone is still very low (less than 1%), and similar to most birth control pills.
- The new studies do not prove that Yasmin or Yaz causes women to have a significantly higher risk of blood clots when compared with other birth control pills.
- Results from the recent studies are different than the findings of older studies which showed the risk of blood clots with Yasmin to be similar to other typical birth control pills.

What should I do if I am currently taking Yasmin or Yaz?

- If you have concerns about the safety of your birth control pill, contact your physician.
- Yasmin or Yaz may still be the right choice for you. Continue taking the birth control pills until you and your physician decide what is best for you. Based on your health status and family history, your physician may consider switching you to another birth control pill.
- The risks and benefits of any contraceptive should be weighed carefully against the risk of an unintended pregnancy.
- Contact your healthcare provider if you experience symptoms such as shortness of breath, chest pain, persistent leg pain or swelling of the leg, while taking birth control pills as these may be signs of a blood clot.