

**Risk of venous thromboembolism (VTE)<sup>3,4</sup>**

Circumstance	Risk of VTE per 100,000 women	Relative risk
Healthy non-pregnant women (not taking any oral contraceptive)	About five cases per year	Baseline
COC containing norethisterone (1st generation) or levonorgestrel (2nd generation)	About 15 cases per year of use	three-fold increase
COC containing gestodene or desogestrel (3rd generation)	About 25 cases per year of use	five-fold increase
Pregnancy	About 60 cases per year	12-fold increase

**Table 2:** Components of combined oral contraceptives (COC)<sup>3, 5, 11</sup>

Oestrogen level Ethinylestradiol (micrograms)	Progestogen (micrograms)	Brand names
20 micrograms	Levonorgestrel 100	Loette Microgynon 20 ED
	Desogestrel 150	Mercilon 21 Mercilon 28
30 micrograms	Gestodene 75	Femodene 28 Minulet 28
	Levonorgestrel 150	Levlen ED* Microgynon 30 Microgynon 30 ED Monofeme* Nordette
	Desogestrel 150	Marvelon 21 Marvelon 28
	Drospirenone 3000	Yasmin
35 micrograms	Cyproterone 2000	Estelle 35 ED* Diane-35 ED
	Norethisterone 500	Norimin*
	Norethisterone 1000	Brevinor 1/21* Brevinor 1/28*
50 micrograms	Levonorgestrel 125	Microgynon 50 ED*
Phasic 30/40/30	Levonorgestrel 50/75 /125	Trifeme 28* Triphasil 28 Triquilar ED
Mestranol† 50 micrograms	Norethisterone 1000	Norinyl 1/28

\* Fully funded

† Mestranol is converted in the liver to ethinylestradiol; 50 micrograms of mestranol is pharmacologically equivalent to 35 micrograms of ethinylestradiol.<sup>8</sup>

**Table 3:** Combined oral contraceptive adverse effects and potential solutions<sup>3, 5, 10</sup>

<b>Adverse effect</b>	<b>Action needed</b>	<b>Pill Suggestions</b>
<b>Acne</b>	Increase oestrogen Reduce progestogen or change to less androgenic progestogen	Marvelon Femodene Yasmin Estelle 35 ED* Mercilon
<b>Amenorrhoea</b>	Increase oestrogen Decrease progestogen	Norimin* Brevinor-1*
<b>Breakthrough bleeding</b> • Early to mid cycle	Increase oestrogen	Levlen*, Monofeme*, Microgynon 30 Marvelon
• Late cycle	Increase progestogen or change type	Femodene Trifeme*, Triphasil, Triquilar
<b>Breast soreness</b>	Decrease oestrogen Decrease progestogen	Loette, Microgynon 20 Mercilon
<b>Depression, moodiness or irritability</b>	Decrease progestogen	Norimin* Loette, Microgynon 20 Trifeme*, Triphasil, Triquilar
<b>Headache in pill-free week</b>	Tri-cycle pills (skip two pill-free weeks in every three months)	
<b>Menstrual cramps</b>	Increase progestogen or tri-cycle pills	
<b>Nausea</b>	Decrease oestrogen	Loette, Microgynon 20 Mercilon
<b>Weight gain</b>	Decrease oestrogen Decrease progestogen	Loette, Microgynon 20 Mercilon

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