



health

Department:  
Health  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Private Bag X828, PRETORIA, 0001. 27th Floor, Room 2710, Civitas, Cnr Thabo Sehume & Struben Street, PRETORIA, 0001  
Tel: +27 (0) 12 395 8000, Fax: +27 (0) 12 395 8422

13 October 2014

To all public health nurses, doctors and managers

**CIRCULAR: CHANGES IN THE PRESCRIPTION OF PROGESTIN SUBDERMAL IMPLANTS (IMPLANON) IN WOMEN WHO ARE TAKING ENZYME INDUCING DRUGS SUCH AS EFAVIRENZ FOR HIV, RIFAMPICIN FOR TB, AND CERTAIN DRUGS USED FOR EPILEPSY (CARBAMAZEPINE, PHENYTOIN, AND PHENOBARBITAL)**

New evidence has emerged that certain enzyme inducing drugs, including efavirenz for women who are HIV positive; rifampicin for women who have TB; and carbamazepine, phenytoin, and phenobarbital for women with epilepsy can interfere with the action and effectiveness of progestin subdermal implants.

It is therefore recommended:

- 1) **Women who are on the enzyme inducing drugs listed above should not use progestin subdermal implants (Implanon) but rather use another method, e.g. intrauterine devices or depot medroxyprogesterone acetate (DMPA).** The effectiveness of combined oral contraceptives may be impaired by the enzyme inducing drugs, but could be used together with condoms if the women prefer this method.
- 2) **Women who are HIV infected and on efavirenz, or who are epileptic and on carbamazepine, phenytoin, or phenobarbital, and already have the progestin subdermal implants (Implanon) inserted should be covered with another non-hormonal contraceptive method (intrauterine devices or condoms).** They should be given the option of having the progestin subdermal implants (Implanon) removed and replaced with an alternative method as in 1) above.
- 3) **Women who are infected with TB and on rifampicin and already have the progestin subdermal implants (Implanon) inserted should be covered with another non-hormonal contraceptive method (e.g. intrauterine devices or condoms) for the duration of their TB treatment.**

For more information please contact Dr Pearl Holele on [Holelp@health.gov.za](mailto:Holelp@health.gov.za) or 012 395 9736 or Dr Zuki Pinini on [PininZ@health.gov.za](mailto:PininZ@health.gov.za) or 012 395 9157 in the National Department of Health.

  
DR Y PILLAY

DEPUTY DIRECTOR-GENERAL: HIV/AIDS, TB AND MCWH

DATE: 16/10/14