

Advanced Practitioner Resources: *Provision Guides*

modification date:	June 20, 2013
content:	Method Bridging Protocol

Overview

A clinician needs to rule out the possibility of pregnancy before inserting a LARC method. In situations where the clinician is uncertain whether a patient is pregnant, a woman can be provided with another contraceptive method to use until the clinician is reasonably certain that she is not pregnant. Then a LARC method can be inserted. This is referred to as “bridging”.

When to insert a LARC method:

A LARC method can be inserted at any time during the menstrual cycle when a clinician can reasonably be certain that a woman is not pregnant. This includes if she has no symptoms or signs of pregnancy and meets any one of the following criteria:

- is ≤7 days after the start of normal menses
- has not had sexual intercourse since the start of last normal menses
- has been correctly and consistently using a reliable method of contraception
- is ≤7 days after spontaneous or induced abortion
- is within 4 weeks postpartum
- is fully or nearly fully breastfeeding (exclusively breastfeeding or the vast majority [≥85%] of feeds are breastfeeds),* amenorrheic, and <6 months postpartum

Procedure:

1. Check UPT
 - a. If negative and patient reports no incidents of unprotected sexual intercourse since LMP, insert LARC
 - i. Advise patient to use back-up method such as condoms or abstinence for 7 days if she is receiving the hormonal IUD or subdermal implant. The copper IUD is effective immediately.
 - b. If negative and patient reports unprotected sexual intercourse within the last five days:
 - i. Offer emergency contraception (EC) and bridge patient with oral contraceptive pills, patch, ring or birth control shot
 - ii. Copper IUD can be inserted and used as an EC method
 - iii. Have patient begin bridge method same day
 - iv. Advise patient to use back-up method such as condoms or abstinence for 7 days
 - v. Have patient return in ≥ 3 weeks for repeat UPT
 1. At that time, if negative UPT and patient has been using method correctly and consistently, insert LARC