PROGESTERONE CHALLENGE TESTING

Women have periods because of hormone messages that travel between the brain, the pituitary gland, the ovaries and the uterus. If these hormones are out of balance, or if there are problems with the uterus or ovaries, a woman may stop having periods. This is called Secondary Amenorrhea. This means that a woman has had normal, regular periods in the past, but now has no had periods for 3-6 months. This is a fairly common condition.

A person may stop having periods for many reasons. The most common cause of amenorrhea (no periods) is pregnancy. Mental and physical stresses can also be a cause of missed periods. In some cases, missed periods can be a sign of a medical problem.

Some women who have not had periods for several months do not want to just "wait and see" when their next periods will come. Testing is available at the Center to find out the cause of the missed periods. The first step is a physical exam and pregnancy test. The pregnancy test is very sensitive and will show if a woman is more than 10 days pregnant. If the pregnancy test is negative, a small blood sample is taken for hormone function tests. These tests check hormones from the pituitary and thyroid gland. The tests check for conditions that might require further treatment. If tests show there are possible problems with these glands, the clinician will refer you to a specialist for further work-up and treatment.

If the pituitary and thyroid tests are normal, a medication named Provera can be given to try to bring on a period. In many cases, a period will begin within 2 weeks of taking Provera. However, some women will have no bleeding at all. Your response to this medication will give us a lot of information about why you haven't been getting your period. The clinician will want to see you for an appointment 3 weeks after you have taken Provera. At this visit, the response to the medication will be discussed. If more tests are needed, they will be ordered at this time. If medical problems have been found, or if you are planning to get pregnant soon, a referral to a specialist will be provided once the test results are known.

**Directions for taking Provera:**
- Take one pill every day for 10 days. Bleeding will usually begin within 2 weeks after finishing Provera.
- Continue taking a pill every day unless bleeding begins. Once bleeding starts, you may quit taking Provera.
- If you have vaginal intercourse, use condoms and a spermicide (or other barrier method).
- Be sure to keep your appointment for a follow-up visit in 3 weeks. The Clinician should be able to explain the reason for the missed periods at that visit.

**Directions for women who want to begin birth control methods:**
- Start the birth control method the Sunday after bleeding begins.
- Even a small amount of bleeding counts as a period. You may start the birth control as long as there is some bleeding.
- If you have no bleeding, do not start the birth control method. If you have vaginal intercourse, use condoms and a spermicide (or another barrier method) until you can be seen at the Center.
- Be sure to keep your appointment for a follow-up visit in 3 weeks. If you have had some bleeding and started birth control method, the clinician will write a prescription for more pills when you come back.

**Directions for women who want to use Depo-Provera, IUC, or Implanon:**
- Once bleeding begins, you will need to be seen for an appointment within 7 days in order to get or Depo-Provera. Call the Center right away so that a prompt appointment can be made. This visit will take the place of the 3-week follow-up visit.
- If you have no bleeding, return to the Center in 3 weeks for a follow-up appointment.
- If you have vaginal intercourse, use condoms and a spermicide (or another barrier method) until you can be seen at the Center.

*Store at room temperature (59-86°F) away from moisture and sunlight*

*KEEP MEDICATIONS OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN*

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PP688-Progestin Pt Info.eng.6-2014