



The Consumer Healthcare Association

12 February 2021

PAGB welcomes bid to offer over-the-counter contraceptive pill

A move to make two brands of contraceptive pill available for purchase in the UK without a prescription is being put out to consultation, the MHRA (Medicine and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency) [announced today](#).

Two pharmaceutical companies have applied for reclassification of their progestogen-only contraceptive pill (desogestrel) from prescription-only to pharmacy products, which would allow over-the-counter sale under the supervision of a qualified pharmacist.

Maxwellia is seeking the switch for its Lovima brand and HRA Pharma for its Hana brand.

Michelle Riddalls, CEO of PAGB, the consumer healthcare association, said: “We fully support these reclassification applications.

“Switching products from prescription-only to make them available over the counter, once their safety and efficacy has been rigorously assessed and established, is a positive step.

“It enables people to self care where appropriate, minimising inconvenience for individuals and protecting NHS resources such as GP appointments for those who need them most.

“The applications by Maxwellia and HRA Pharma have particular significance as they are the first to seek over-the-counter licences for any form of daily contraceptive pill, 60 years after the pill in its original form was made available via prescription on the NHS for married women only.

“The MHRA consultation represents a landmark opportunity in women’s health and one which we hope will be viewed positively.

“Both Maxwellia and HRA Pharma have asked the MHRA to permit the sale of their progestogen-only pill products under the supervision of a qualified pharmacist.

“As expert healthcare professionals, pharmacists are fully equipped to offer advice to anyone seeking information about over-the-counter medicines.

“As part of any reclassification of desogestrel, they will be given specific training to enable them to identify whether the product is suitable for a particular individual and pinpoint any issues that might warrant further consultation with a GP or specialist.”

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Notes to editors:

PAGB, the consumer healthcare association, represents the manufacturers of branded OTC medicines, self care medical devices and food supplements in the UK.

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