



The Consumer Healthcare Association

08 July 2021

PAGB welcomes go-ahead for over-the-counter contraceptive pill

In response to the decision by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to approve over-the-counter sales of two brands of contraceptive pill, Michelle Riddalls, CEO of PAGB, the consumer healthcare association, said: “We warmly welcome this decision by the MHRA.

“Making these progestogen-only contraceptive pills available without prescription in the UK is an historic milestone for women and women’s health.

“This is the first time that any form of daily contraceptive pill has been licensed for over-the-counter sale in the UK, 60 years after the pill was originally offered by the NHS – initially to married women only.

“Enabling women to buy the progestogen-only pill in pharmacies will be particularly beneficial at a time when accessing sexual health services has become more challenging in parts of the UK because of pressure on NHS resources and the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Both of the pill brands approved for over-the-counter use, Hana and Lovima, will be sold only under the supervision of qualified pharmacists who can offer expert advice on the products and their suitability for women seeking contraceptive options.

“They will be able to pinpoint any issues that might warrant further consultation with a GP or specialist.

“As with any reclassification of a medicine from prescription-only to over-the-counter status, the MHRA’s decision follows a rigorous assessment of the safety and efficacy of the progestogen-only pill (desogestrel) and a public consultation.

“Increasing the number of medicines available over the counter offers people faster and easier access to effective products, encouraging self care where appropriate and reducing pressure on GPs and the NHS generally.”

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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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