

## HIGHLIGHTS OF PRESCRIBING INFORMATION

These highlights do not include all the information needed to use FEMCON® Fe safely and effectively. See Full Prescribing Information for FEMCON Fe.

FEMCON Fe (norethindrone and ethinyl estradiol tablets and ferrous fumarate tablets) for oral use  
Initial U.S. Approval: 1975

### WARNING: CIGARETTE SMOKING AND SERIOUS CARDIOVASCULAR EVENTS

See Full Prescribing Information for complete boxed warning.

- FEMCON Fe is contraindicated in women over 35 years old who smoke. (4)
- Cigarette smoking increases the risk of serious cardiovascular events from combination oral contraceptives (COC) use. (4)

### INDICATIONS AND USAGE

- FEMCON Fe is a progestin/estrogen COC indicated for use by females of reproductive potential to prevent pregnancy. (1)

### DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION

- Take one tablet by mouth at the same time every day. Tablets may be chewed or swallowed. (2.1)
- Take tablets in the order directed on the blister pack. (2.1)

### DOSAGE FORMS AND STRENGTHS

FEMCON Fe consists of 28 tablets in the following order (3):

- 21 white tablets (active), each containing 0.4 mg norethindrone and 35 mcg ethinyl estradiol
- 7 brown tablets (non-hormonal placebo), each containing 75 mg ferrous fumarate. The ferrous fumarate tablets do not serve any therapeutic purpose.

### CONTRAINDICATIONS

- A high risk of arterial or venous thrombotic diseases (4)
- Liver tumors or liver disease (4)
- Undiagnosed abnormal uterine bleeding (4)

- Pregnancy (4)
- Breast cancer or other estrogen- or progestin-sensitive cancer (4)

### WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS

- Thrombotic Disorders and Other Vascular Problems:** Stop FEMCON Fe if a thrombotic event occurs. Stop at least 4 weeks before through 2 weeks after major surgery. Start no earlier than 4 weeks after delivery, in women who are not breastfeeding. (5.1)
- Liver disease:** Discontinue FEMCON Fe if jaundice occurs. (5.2)
- High blood pressure:** If used in women with well-controlled hypertension, monitor blood pressure and stop FEMCON Fe if blood pressure rises significantly. (5.3)
- Carbohydrate and lipid metabolic effects:** Monitor prediabetic and diabetic women taking FEMCON Fe. Consider an alternative contraceptive method for women with uncontrolled dyslipidemia. (5.5)
- Headache:** Evaluate significant change in headaches and discontinue FEMCON Fe if indicated. (5.6)
- Bleeding Irregularities and Amenorrhea:** Evaluate irregular bleeding or amenorrhea. (5.7)

### ADVERSE REACTIONS

The most common adverse reactions were: irregular uterine bleeding, nausea, breast tenderness, and headache. (6)

To report SUSPECTED ADVERSE REACTIONS, contact Allergan at 1-800-433-8871 or FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088 or [www.fda.gov/medwatch](http://www.fda.gov/medwatch).

### DRUG INTERACTIONS

- Drugs or herbal products that induce certain enzymes, including CYP3A4, may decrease the effectiveness of COCs or increase breakthrough bleeding. Counsel patients to use a back-up method or alternative method of contraception when enzyme inducers are used with COCs. (7.1)

### USE IN SPECIFIC POPULATIONS

- Nursing mothers: Advise use of another contraceptive method. FEMCON Fe can decrease milk production. (8.3)

See 17 for PATIENT COUNSELING INFORMATION and FDA-approved patient labeling.

Revised: 09/2016

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## FULL PRESCRIBING INFORMATION

**WARNING: CIGARETTE SMOKING AND SERIOUS CARDIOVASCULAR EVENTS**  
Cigarette smoking increases the risk of serious cardiovascular events from combination oral contraceptive (COC) use. This risk increases with age, particularly in women over 35 years of age, and with the number of cigarettes smoked. For this reason, COCs are contraindicated in women who are over 35 years of age and smoke [see *Contraindications (4)*].

### 1 INDICATIONS AND USAGE

FEMCON Fe is indicated for use by females of reproductive potential to prevent pregnancy.

### 2 DOSAGE AND ADMINISTRATION

#### 2.1 How to Start FEMCON Fe

FEMCON Fe is dispensed in a blister card [see *How Supplied/Storage and Handling (16)*]. FEMCON Fe may be started using either a Day 1 start or a Sunday start (see Table 1). For the first cycle of a Sunday Start regimen, an additional method of contraception should be used until after the first 7 consecutive days of administration.

#### 2.2 How to Take FEMCON Fe

FEMCON Fe (white active tablets and brown placebo tablets) may be swallowed whole or chewed and swallowed. If the tablet is chewed, the patient should drink a full glass (8 ounces) of liquid immediately after swallowing.

**Table 1: Instructions for Administration of FEMCON Fe**

<p><b>Starting CHCs in women not currently using hormonal contraception (Day 1 Start or Sunday Start)</b></p> <p><b>Important:</b> Consider the possibility of ovulation and conception prior to initiation of this product.</p> <p><b>Tablet Color:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>FEMCON Fe active tablets are white (Day 1 to Day 21).</li><li>FEMCON Fe placebo tablets are brown (Day 22 to Day 28).</li></ul>	<p><b>Day 1 Start:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Take first white active tablet on the first day of menses.</li><li>Take subsequent white active tablets once daily at the same time each day for a total of 21 days.</li><li>Take one <b>brown</b> placebo tablet daily for 7 days and at the same time of day that active tablets were taken.</li><li>Begin each subsequent pack on the same day of the week as the first cycle pack (i.e., on the day after taking the last inactive tablet).</li></ul>
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	<p><b>Sunday Start:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take first active tablet on the first Sunday after the onset of menses. <b>Due to the potential risk of becoming pregnant, use additional non-hormonal contraception (such as condoms and spermicide) for the first seven days of the patient’s first cycle pack of FEMCON Fe.</b></li> <li>• Take subsequent <b>white</b> active tablets once daily at the same time each day for a total of 21 days.</li> <li>• Take one <b>brown</b> placebo tablet daily for the following 7 days and at the same time of day that active tablets were taken.</li> <li>• Begin each subsequent pack on the same day of the week as the first cycle pack (i.e., on the Sunday after taking the last inactive tablet) and additional non-hormonal contraceptive is not needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Switching to FEMCON Fe from another hormonal contraceptive</b>	Start on the same day that a new pack of the previous hormonal contraceptive would have started.
<b>Switching from another contraceptive method to FEMCON Fe</b>	<b>Start FEMCON Fe:</b>
• <b>Transdermal patch</b>	• On the day when next application would have been scheduled
• <b>Vaginal ring</b>	• On the day when next insertion would have been scheduled
• <b>Injection</b>	• On the day when next injection would have been scheduled
• <b>Intrauterine contraceptive</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On the day of removal</li> <li>• If the IUD is not removed on first day of the patient’s menstrual cycle, additional non-hormonal contraceptive (such as condoms and spermicide) is needed for the first seven days of the first cycle pack.</li> </ul>
• <b>Implant</b>	• On the day of removal
<b>Complete instructions to facilitate patient counseling on proper tablet usage are located in the FDA-Approved Patient Labeling.</b>	

## **Starting FEMCON Fe after Abortion or Miscarriage**

### *First-trimester*

- After a first-trimester abortion or miscarriage, FEMCON Fe may be started immediately. An additional method of contraception is not needed if FEMCON Fe is started within 5 days after termination of the pregnancy.
- If FEMCON Fe is not started within 5 days after termination of the pregnancy, the patient should use additional non-hormonal contraception (such as condoms and spermicide) for the first seven days of her first cycle pack of FEMCON Fe.

### *Second-trimester*

- Do not start until 4 weeks after a second-trimester abortion or miscarriage, due to the increased risk of thromboembolic disease. Start FEMCON Fe, following the instructions in Table 1 for Day 1 or Sunday start, as desired. If using Sunday start, use additional non-hormonal contraception (such as condoms and spermicide) for the first seven days of the patient's first cycle pack of FEMCON Fe. [See *Contraindications (4)*, *Warnings and Precautions (5.1)*, and *FDA-Approved Patient Labeling*.]

## **Starting FEMCON Fe after Childbirth**

- Do not start until 4 weeks after delivery, due to the increased risk of thromboembolic disease. Start contraceptive therapy with FEMCON Fe following the instructions in Table 1 for women not currently using hormonal contraception.
- If the woman has not yet had a period postpartum, consider the possibility of ovulation and conception occurring prior to use of FEMCON Fe. [See *Contraindications (4)*, *Warnings and Precautions (5.1)*, *Use in Specific Populations (8.1 and 8.3)*, and *FDA-Approved Patient Labeling*].

## 2.3 Missed Tablets

<b>Table 2: Instructions for Missed FEMCON Fe Tablets</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>If one white active tablet is missed in Weeks 1, 2, or 3</li></ul>	Take the tablet as soon as possible. Continue taking one tablet a day until the pack is finished.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>If two white active tablets are missed in Week 1 or Week 2</li></ul>	Take the two missed tablets as soon as possible and the next two active tablets the next day. Continue taking one tablet a day until the pack is finished. <b>Additional non-hormonal contraception (such as condoms and spermicide) should be used as back-up if the patient has sex within 7 days after missing tablets.</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>If two white active tablets are missed in Week 3 or three or more white active tablets are missed in a row in Weeks 1, 2, or 3</li></ul>	<b>Day 1 start:</b> Throw out the rest of the pack and start a new pack that same day. <b>Sunday start:</b> Continue taking one tablet a day until Sunday, then throw out the rest of the pack and start a new pack that same day. <b>Additional non-hormonal contraception (such as condoms and spermicide) should be used as back-up if the patient has sex within 7 days after missing tablets.</b>

## 2.4 Advice in Case of Gastrointestinal Disturbances

In case of severe vomiting or diarrhea, absorption may not be complete and additional contraceptive measures should be taken. If vomiting or diarrhea occurs within 3 to 4 hours after taking an active tablet, handle this as a missed tablet [see *FDA-Approved Patient Labeling*].

## 3 DOSAGE FORMS AND STRENGTHS

FEMCON Fe (norethindrone and ethinyl estradiol tablets and ferrous fumarate tablets) is available in blister cards.

Each blister card contains 28 tablets in the following order:

- 21 round, white (active) tablets imprinted with “W|C” on one side and “581” on the other and each containing 0.4 mg norethindrone and 35 mcg ethinyl estradiol.
- 7 round, brown (non-hormonal placebo) tablets imprinted with “PD 622” on one side and each containing 75 mg ferrous fumarate. The ferrous fumarate tablets do not serve any therapeutic purpose.

## 4 CONTRADINDICATIONS

Do not prescribe FEMCON Fe to women who are known to have the following conditions:

- A high risk of arterial or venous thrombotic diseases. Examples include women who are known to:
  - Smoke, if over age 35 [see *Boxed Warning and Warnings and Precautions (5.1)*]

- Have deep vein thrombosis or pulmonary embolism, now or in the past [see *Warnings and Precautions (5.1)*]
- Have inherited or acquired hypercoagulopathies [see *Warnings and Precautions (5.1)*]
- Have cerebrovascular disease [see *Warnings and Precautions (5.1)*]
- Have coronary artery disease [see *Warnings and Precautions (5.1)*]
- Have thrombogenic valvular or thrombogenic rhythm diseases of the heart (for example, subacute bacterial endocarditis with valvular disease, or atrial fibrillation) [see *Warnings and Precautions (5.1)*]
- Have uncontrolled hypertension [see *Warnings and Precautions (5.3)*]
- Have diabetes mellitus with vascular disease [see *Warnings and Precautions (5.5)*]
- Have headaches with focal neurological symptoms or have migraine headaches with aura [see *Warnings and Precautions (5.6)*]
  - Women over age 35 with any migraine headaches [see *Warnings and Precautions (5.6)*]
- Liver tumors, benign or malignant, or liver disease [see *Warnings and Precautions (5.2)*]
- Undiagnosed abnormal uterine bleeding [see *Warnings and Precautions (5.7)*]
- Pregnancy, because there is no reason to use COCs during pregnancy [see *Warnings and Precautions (5.8)* and *Use in Specific Populations (8.1)* ].
- Breast cancer or other estrogen- or progestin-sensitive cancer, now or in the past [see *Warnings and Precautions (5.10)*]
- Hypersensitivity to any of the components.

## 5 WARNINGS AND PRECAUTIONS

### 5.1 Thrombotic Disorders and Other Vascular Problems

- Stop FEMCON Fe if an arterial thrombotic event or venous thromboembolic (VTE) event occurs.
- Stop FEMCON Fe if there is unexplained loss of vision, proptosis, diplopia, papilledema, or retinal vascular lesions. Evaluate for retinal vein thrombosis immediately.
- If feasible, stop FEMCON Fe at least 4 weeks before and through 2 weeks after major surgery or other surgeries known to have an elevated risk of VTE as well as during the following prolonged immobilization.
- Start FEMCON Fe no earlier than 4 weeks after delivery, in women who are not breastfeeding. The risk of postpartum VTE decreases after the third postpartum week, whereas the risk of ovulation increases after the third postpartum week.
- The use of COCs increases the risk of VTE. However, pregnancy increases the risk of VTE as much or more than the use of COCs. The risk of VTE in women using COCs is 3 to 9 per 10,000 woman-years. The risk of VTE is highest during the first year of use of COCs and

when restarting hormonal contraception after a break of 4 weeks or longer. The risk of thromboembolic disease due to COCs gradually disappears after use is discontinued.

Use of COCs also increases the risk of arterial thromboses such as strokes and myocardial infarctions, especially in women with other risk factors for these events. COCs have been shown to increase both the relative and attributable risks of cerebrovascular events (thrombotic and hemorrhagic strokes). The risk increases with age, particularly in women over 35 years of age who smoke.

- Use COCs with caution in women with cardiovascular disease risk factors.

## 5.2 Liver Disease

### **Impaired Liver Function**

Do not use FEMCON Fe in women with liver disease, such as acute viral hepatitis or severe (decompensated) cirrhosis of liver [see *Contraindications (4)*]. Acute or chronic disturbances of liver function may necessitate the discontinuation of COC use until markers of liver function return to normal and COC causation has been excluded. Discontinue FEMCON Fe if jaundice develops.

### **Liver Tumors**

FEMCON Fe is contraindicated in women with benign and malignant liver tumors [see *Contraindications (4)*]. Hepatic adenomas are associated with COC use. An estimate of the attributable risk is 3.3 cases/100,000 COC users. Rupture of hepatic adenomas may cause death through intra-abdominal hemorrhage.

Studies have shown an increased risk of developing hepatocellular carcinoma in long-term (>8 years) COC users. However, the risk of liver cancers in COC users is less than one case per million users.

## 5.3 High Blood Pressure

FEMCON Fe is contraindicated in women with uncontrolled hypertension or hypertension with vascular disease [see *Contraindications (4)*]. For women with well-controlled hypertension, monitor blood pressure and stop FEMCON Fe if blood pressure rises significantly.

An increase in blood pressure has been reported in women taking COCs, and this increase is more likely in older women with extended duration of use. The incidence of hypertension increases with increasing concentrations of progestin.

## 5.4 Gallbladder Disease

Studies suggest a small increased relative risk of developing gallbladder disease among COC users. Use of COCs may worsen existing gallbladder disease. A past history of COC-related cholestasis predicts an increased risk with subsequent COC use. Women with a history of pregnancy-related cholestasis may be at an increased risk for COC related cholestasis.

## 5.5 Carbohydrate and Lipid Metabolic Effects

Carefully monitor prediabetic and diabetic women who take FEMCON Fe. COCs may decrease glucose tolerance.

Consider alternative contraception for women with uncontrolled dyslipidemia. A small proportion of women will have adverse lipid changes while on COCs.

Women with hypertriglyceridemia, or a family history thereof, may be at an increased risk of pancreatitis when using COCs.

## **5.6 Headache**

If a woman taking FEMCON Fe develops new headaches that are recurrent, persistent, or severe, evaluate the cause and discontinue FEMCON Fe if indicated.

Consider discontinuation of FEMCON Fe in the case of increased frequency or severity of migraine during COC use (which may be prodromal of a cerebrovascular event).

## **5.7 Bleeding Irregularities and Amenorrhea**

### **Unscheduled Bleeding and Spotting**

Unscheduled (breakthrough or intracyclic) bleeding and spotting sometimes occur in patients on COCs, especially during the first three months of use. If bleeding persists or occurs after previously regular cycles, check for causes such as pregnancy or malignancy. If pathology and pregnancy are excluded, bleeding irregularities may resolve over time or with a change to a different contraceptive product.

### **Amenorrhea and Oligomenorrhea**

Women who use FEMCON Fe may experience amenorrhea. Some women may experience amenorrhea or oligomenorrhea after discontinuation of COCs, especially when such a condition was preexistent.

If scheduled (withdrawal) bleeding does not occur, consider the possibility of pregnancy. If the patient has not adhered to the prescribed dosing schedule (missed one or more active tablets or started taking them on a day later than she should have), consider the possibility of pregnancy at the time of the first missed period and take appropriate diagnostic measures. If the patient has adhered to the prescribed regimen and misses two consecutive periods, rule out pregnancy.

## **5.8 COC Use Before or During Early Pregnancy**

Extensive epidemiologic studies have revealed no increased risk of birth defects in women who have used oral contraceptives prior to pregnancy. Studies also do not suggest a teratogenic effect, particularly in so far as cardiac anomalies and limb reduction defects are concerned, when oral contraceptives are taken inadvertently during early pregnancy. Discontinue FEMCON Fe use if pregnancy is confirmed.

Administration of COCs to induce withdrawal bleeding should not be used as a test for pregnancy [*see Use in Specific Populations (8.1)*].

## **5.9 Depression**

Carefully observe women with a history of depression and discontinue FEMCON Fe if depression recurs to a serious degree.

## **5.10 Carcinoma of the Breast and Cervix**

- FEMCON Fe is contraindicated in women who currently have or have had breast cancer because breast cancer may be hormonally sensitive [*see Contraindications (4)*].

- There is substantial evidence that COCs do not increase the incidence of breast cancer. Although some past studies have suggested that COCs might increase the incidence of breast cancer, more recent studies have not confirmed such findings.
- Some studies suggest that COC use has been associated with an increase in the risk of cervical cancer or intraepithelial neoplasia. However, there continues to be controversy about the extent to which such findings may be due to differences in sexual behavior and other factors.

### 5.11 Effect on Binding Globulins

The estrogen component of COCs may raise the serum concentrations of thyroxine-binding globulin, sex hormone-binding globulin, and cortisol-binding globulin. The dose of replacement thyroid hormone or cortisol therapy may need to be increased.

### 5.12 Monitoring

A woman who is taking COCs should have a yearly visit with her healthcare provider for a blood pressure check and for other indicated healthcare.

### 5.13 Hereditary Angioedema

In women with hereditary angioedema, exogenous estrogens may induce or exacerbate symptoms of angioedema.

### 5.14 Chloasma

Chloasma may occasionally occur, especially in women with a history of chloasma gravidarum. Women with a tendency to chloasma should avoid exposure to the sun or ultraviolet radiation while taking FEMCON Fe.

## 6 ADVERSE REACTIONS

The following serious adverse reactions with the use of COCs are discussed elsewhere in the labeling:

- Serious cardiovascular events and stroke [*see [Boxed Warning and Warnings and Precautions \(5.1\)](#)*]
- Vascular events [*see [Warnings and Precautions \(5.1\)](#)*]
- Liver disease [*see [Warnings and Precautions \(5.2\)](#)*]

The following adverse reactions are commonly reported by COC users. Because these reactions are voluntarily reported by from a population of uncertain size, it is not always possible to reliably estimate their frequency or establish a causal relationship to drug exposure:

- Irregular uterine bleeding
- Nausea
- Breast tenderness
- Headache

## 7 DRUG INTERACTIONS

Consult the labeling of concurrently used drugs to obtain further information about interactions with hormonal contraceptives or the potential for enzyme alterations.

## 7.1 Effects of Other Drugs on Combined Oral Contraceptives

Substances decreasing the plasma concentrations of COCs and potentially diminishing the efficacy of COCs:

Drugs or herbal products that induce certain enzymes, including cytochrome P450 3A4 (CYP3A4), may decrease the plasma concentrations of COCs and potentially diminish the effectiveness of COCs or increase breakthrough bleeding. Some drugs or herbal products that may decrease the effectiveness of hormonal contraceptives include phenytoin, barbiturates, carbamazepine, bosentan, felbamate, griseofulvin, oxcarbazepine, rifampicin, topiramate, rifabutin, rufinamide, aprepitant, and products containing St. John's wort. Interactions between hormonal contraceptives and other drugs may lead to breakthrough bleeding and/or contraceptive failure. Counsel women to use an alternative method of contraception or a back-up method when enzyme inducers are used with COCs, and to continue back-up contraception for 28 days after discontinuing the enzyme inducer to ensure contraceptive reliability.

Colesevelam: Colesevelam, a bile acid sequestrant, given together with a COC, has been shown to significantly decrease the AUC of EE. The drug interaction between the contraceptive and colesevelam was decreased when the two drug products were given 4 hours apart.

Substances increasing the plasma concentrations of COCs:

Co-administration of atorvastatin or rosuvastatin and certain COCs containing EE increase AUC values for EE by approximately 20-25%. Ascorbic acid and acetaminophen may increase plasma EE concentrations, possibly by inhibition of conjugation. CYP3A4 inhibitors, such as itraconazole, fluconazole, grapefruit juice, or ketoconazole may increase plasma hormone concentrations.

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/Hepatitis C virus (HCV) protease inhibitors and non-nucleoside reverse transcriptase inhibitors:

Significant changes (increase or decrease) in the plasma concentrations of estrogen and/or progestin have been noted in some cases of co-administration with HIV protease inhibitors (decrease [e.g., nelfinavir, ritonavir, darunavir/ritonavir, (fos)amprenavir/ritonavir, lopinavir/ritonavir, and tipranavir/ritonavir] or increase [e.g., indinavir and atazanavir/ritonavir])/HCV protease inhibitors (decrease [e.g., nevirapine] or increase [e.g., etravirine]).

## 7.2 Effects of Combined Oral Contraceptives on Other Drugs

COCs containing EE may inhibit the metabolism of other compounds (e.g., cyclosporine, prednisolone, theophylline, tizanidine, and voriconazole) and increase their plasma concentrations. COCs have been shown to decrease plasma concentrations of acetaminophen, clofibric acid, morphine, salicylic acid, temazepam and lamotrigine. Significant decrease in plasma concentration of lamotrigine has been shown, likely due to induction of lamotrigine glucuronidation. This may reduce seizure control; therefore, dosage adjustments of lamotrigine may be necessary.

Women on thyroid hormone replacement therapy may need increased doses of thyroid hormone because the serum concentration of thyroid-binding globulin increases with use of COCs [*see Warnings and Precautions (5.11)*].

### **7.3 Interference with Laboratory Tests**

The use of contraceptive steroids may influence the results of certain laboratory tests, such as coagulation factors, lipids, glucose tolerance, and binding proteins.

## **8 USE IN SPECIFIC POPULATIONS**

### **8.1 Pregnancy**

There is little or no increased risk of birth defects in women who inadvertently use COCs during early pregnancy. Epidemiologic studies and meta-analyses have not found an increased risk of genital or non-genital birth defects (including cardiac anomalies and limb reduction defects) following exposure to low dose COCs prior to conception or during early pregnancy.

Do not use COCs to induce withdrawal bleeding as a test for pregnancy. Do not use COCs during pregnancy to treat threatened or habitual abortion.

### **8.3 Nursing Mothers**

Advise the nursing mother to use other forms of contraception, when possible, until she has weaned her child. COCs can reduce milk production in breastfeeding mothers. This is less likely to occur once breastfeeding is well-established; however, it can occur at any time in some women. Small amounts of oral contraceptive steroids and/or metabolites are present in breast milk.

### **8.4 Pediatric Use**

Safety and efficacy of FEMCON Fe have been established in women of reproductive age. Efficacy is expected to be the same in post-pubertal adolescents under the age of 18 years as for users 18 years and older. Use of this product before menarche is not indicated.

### **8.5 Geriatric Use**

FEMCON Fe has not been studied in postmenopausal women and is not indicated in this population.

### **8.6 Hepatic Impairment**

The pharmacokinetics of FEMCON Fe has not been studied in women with hepatic impairment. However, steroid hormones may be poorly metabolized in patients with hepatic impairment. Acute or chronic disturbances of liver function may necessitate the discontinuation of COC use until markers of liver function return to normal and COC causation has been excluded [*see Contraindications (4) and Warnings and Precautions (5.2)*].

### **8.7 Renal Impairment**

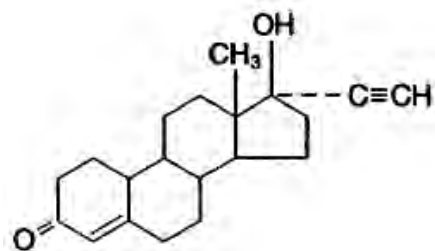
The pharmacokinetics of FEMCON Fe has not been studied in women with renal impairment.

## **10 OVERDOSAGE**

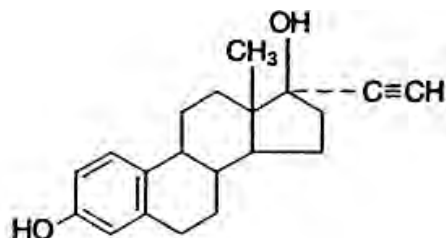
There have been no reports of serious ill effects from overdosage of oral contraceptives, including ingestion by children. Overdosage may cause withdrawal bleeding in females and nausea.

## 11 DESCRIPTION

FEMCON Fe is a combinational contraceptive containing the progestational compound norethindrone and the estrogenic compound ethinyl estradiol. The packaging includes 21 white tablets composed of norethindrone and ethinyl estradiol followed by 7 brown ferrous fumarate (placebo) tablets. The chemical name for norethindrone is 17-hydroxy-19-nor-17 $\alpha$ -pregn-4-en-20-yn-3-one and for ethinyl estradiol the chemical name is 19-nor-17 $\alpha$ -pregna-1,3,5(10)-trien-20-yne-3,17-diol. The structural formulas are:



**NORETHINDRONE**



**ETHINYL ESTRADIOL**

The active white FEMCON Fe tablets contain 0.4 mg norethindrone and 0.035 mg ethinyl estradiol, and the following inactive ingredients: dibasic calcium phosphate, lactose, magnesium stearate, maltodextrin, povidone, sodium starch glycolate, spearmint flavor and sucralose.

The brown tablets contain ferrous fumarate, microcrystalline cellulose, magnesium stearate, povidone, sodium starch glycolate, and compressible sugar. The ferrous fumarate tablets do not serve any therapeutic purpose.

## 12 CLINICAL PHARMACOLOGY

### 12.1 Mechanism of Action

COCs lower the risk of becoming pregnant primarily by suppressing ovulation. Other possible mechanisms may include cervical mucus changes that inhibit sperm penetration and endometrial changes that reduce the likelihood of implantation.

### 12.2 Pharmacodynamics

No specific pharmacodynamic studies were conducted with FEMCON Fe.

## 12.3 Pharmacokinetics

### Absorption

Ethinyl estradiol and norethindrone are rapidly absorbed with maximum plasma concentrations occurring within 2 hours after FEMCON Fe administration (see Table 1). Norethindrone appears to be completely absorbed following oral administration; however, it is subject to first-pass metabolism resulting in an absolute bioavailability of approximately 65 percent. Large intersubject variability is reflected in a 3- to 5-fold variation in norethindrone bioavailability. Ethinyl estradiol bioavailability is approximately 43 percent due to small-intestinal and hepatic first-pass metabolism.

**Table 1. Mean  $\pm$ SD Pharmacokinetic Parameters Following Single Dose Administration of FEMCON Fe in Healthy Female Subjects Under Fasting Conditions.**

Norethindrone/Ethinyl Estradiol	$t_{\max}$ (h)	$C_{\max}$ (pg/mL)	$AUC_{0-\infty}$ (pg•h/mL)	$t_{1/2}$ (h)
Norethindrone 0.4 mg	$1.24 \pm 0.40^a$	$4210.6 \pm 1628.8^a$	$18034.9 \pm 7852.9^b$	$8.6 \pm 3.7^b$
Ethinyl Estradiol 35 mcg	$1.44 \pm 0.33^b$	$131.4 \pm 34.2^b$	$1065.8 \pm 276.2^b$	$17.1 \pm 4.4^b$

<sup>a</sup> $n = 26$

<sup>b</sup> $n = 25$

$C_{\max}$  = maximum plasma concentration;  $t_{\max}$  = time to reach  $C_{\max}$ ; AUC = area under the curve;  $t_{1/2}$  = elimination half- life.

### Food Effect:

Single-dose administration of FEMCON Fe tablets with food decreased the maximum norethindrone and ethinyl estradiol concentration by 53 percent and 47 percent, respectively; the extent of norethindrone and ethinyl estradiol absorption (AUC values) was not affected by food administration.

### Distribution

Norethindrone is 36 percent bound to sex hormone-binding globulin (SHBG) and 61 percent bound to albumin. Ethinyl estradiol is not bound to SHBG but is highly (98.5 percent) bound to albumin. Volume of distribution of norethindrone and ethinyl estradiol ranges from 2 to 4 L/kg.

### Metabolism

Norethindrone undergoes extensive biotransformation, primarily via reduction, followed by sulfate and glucuronide conjugation; less than 5 percent of a norethindrone dose is excreted unchanged; greater than 50 percent and 20-40 percent of a dose is excreted in urine and feces, respectively. The majority of metabolites in the circulation are sulfates, with glucuronides accounting for most of the urinary metabolites.

Ethinyl estradiol is also extensively metabolized, both by oxidation and by conjugation with sulfate and glucuronide. Sulfates are the major circulating conjugates of ethinyl estradiol, and glucuronides predominate in urine. The primary oxidative metabolite is 2-hydroxy-ethinyl estradiol, which is formed by the CYP3A4 isoform of cytochrome P450.

### Excretion

Plasma clearance values for norethindrone and ethinyl estradiol are similar (approximately 0.4 L/hr/kg). Ethinyl estradiol and norethindrone are excreted in both urine and feces, primarily as metabolites. Ethinyl estradiol is excreted in urine and feces as glucuronides and sulfates, and about 28-43 percent undergoes enterohepatic circulation. The mean terminal elimination half-lives of norethindrone and ethinyl estradiol following single dose administration of FEMCON Fe are approximately 9 hours and 17 hours, respectively.

## **13 NONCLINICAL TOXICOLOGY**

### **13.1 Carcinogenesis, Mutagenesis, Impairment of Fertility**

[See *Warnings and Precautions (5.10)* and *Use in Specific Populations (8.1)*.]

## **14 CLINICAL STUDIES**

The data presented in Section 14 are from a clinical trial conducted with norethindrone 0.4 mg/ethinyl estradiol 35 mcg tablets. FEMCON Fe is bioequivalent to these norethindrone acetate/ethinyl estradiol tablets.

In a multicenter open-label clinical trial, 1,970 women, 98% of whom were 16 to 39 years of age, were studied for up to 31 cycles (28 days per cycle) to assess the efficacy of norethindrone /ethinyl estradiol tablets, completing the equivalent of 20,230 cycles of exposure. The racial demographic of all enrolled women was: Caucasian (56%), African-American (14%), and Other (30%) (Hispanic, Native American, etc.). Of treated women, 10% were lost to follow-up, 11% discontinued related to cycle control and 7% discontinued due to other adverse events

The pregnancy rate (Pearl Index [PI]) in all 1,970 women was 1.48 pregnancies per 100 women-years of use (95% confidence interval 0.94 –2.22), based on 23 pregnancies that occurred after the onset of treatment of norethindrone /ethinyl estradiol tablets.

## **16 HOW SUPPLIED/STORAGE AND HANDLING**

### **16.1 How Supplied**

FEMCON Fe (norethindrone and ethinyl estradiol tablets and ferrous fumarate tablets) is available in cartons of five blister cards (dispensers):

NDC 0023-5970-05

Each blister card contains 28 tablets in the following order:

- 21 round, white (active) tablets imprinted with “W|C” on one side and “581” on the other and each containing 0.4 mg norethindrone and 35 mcg ethinyl estradiol.
- 7 brown, round (non-hormonal placebo) tablets imprinted with “PD 622” on one side and each containing 75 mg ferrous fumarate.

### **16.2 Storage Conditions**

- Store at 20° C - 25° C (68° F-77° F); excursions permitted to 15° C - 30° C (59° F - 86° F) [see USP Controlled Room Temperature].

- Protect from light.

Keep out of the reach of children.

## 17 PATIENT COUNSELING INFORMATION

See [FDA-Approved Patient Labeling](#) (Patient Information and Instructions for Use)

Counsel patients about the following information:

- Cigarette smoking increases the risk of serious cardiovascular events from COC use, and that women who are over 35 years old and smoke should not use COCs [*see Boxed Warning*].
- Increased risk of VTE compared to non-users of COCs is greatest after initially starting a COC or restarting (following a 4-week or greater pill-free interval) the same or a different COC [*see Warnings and Precautions (5.1)*].
- FEMCON Fe does not protect against HIV infection (AIDS) and other sexually transmitted diseases.
- FEMCON Fe is not to be used during pregnancy; if pregnancy occurs during use of FEMCON Fe, instruct the patient to stop further use [*see Warnings and Precautions (5.8)*].
- Take one tablet daily by mouth at the same time every day. Instruct patients what to do in the event pills are missed [*see Dosage and Administration (2.3)*].
- Use a back-up or alternative method of contraception when enzyme inducers are used with FEMCON Fe [*see Drug Interactions (7.1)*].
- COCs may reduce breast milk production; this is less likely to occur if breastfeeding is well established [*see Use in Specific Populations (8.3)*].
- A woman who starts COCs postpartum and who has not yet had a period should use an additional method of contraception until she has taken a white tablet for 7 consecutive days [*see Dosage and Administration (2.2)*].
- Amenorrhea may occur. Consider pregnancy in the event of amenorrhea at the time of the first missed period. Rule out pregnancy in the event of amenorrhea in two or more consecutive cycles [*see Warnings and Precautions (5.7)*].

## Patient Information

### FEMCON Fe [*fě'm kon FE*]

(norethindrone and ethinyl estradiol tablets and  
ferrous fumarate tablets)

#### What is the most important information I should know about FEMCON Fe?

**Do not use FEMCON Fe if you smoke cigarettes and are over 35 years old.** Smoking increases your risk of serious cardiovascular side effects (heart and blood vessel problems) from birth control pills, including death from heart attack, blood clots or stroke. This risk increases with age and the number of cigarettes you smoke.

#### What is FEMCON Fe?

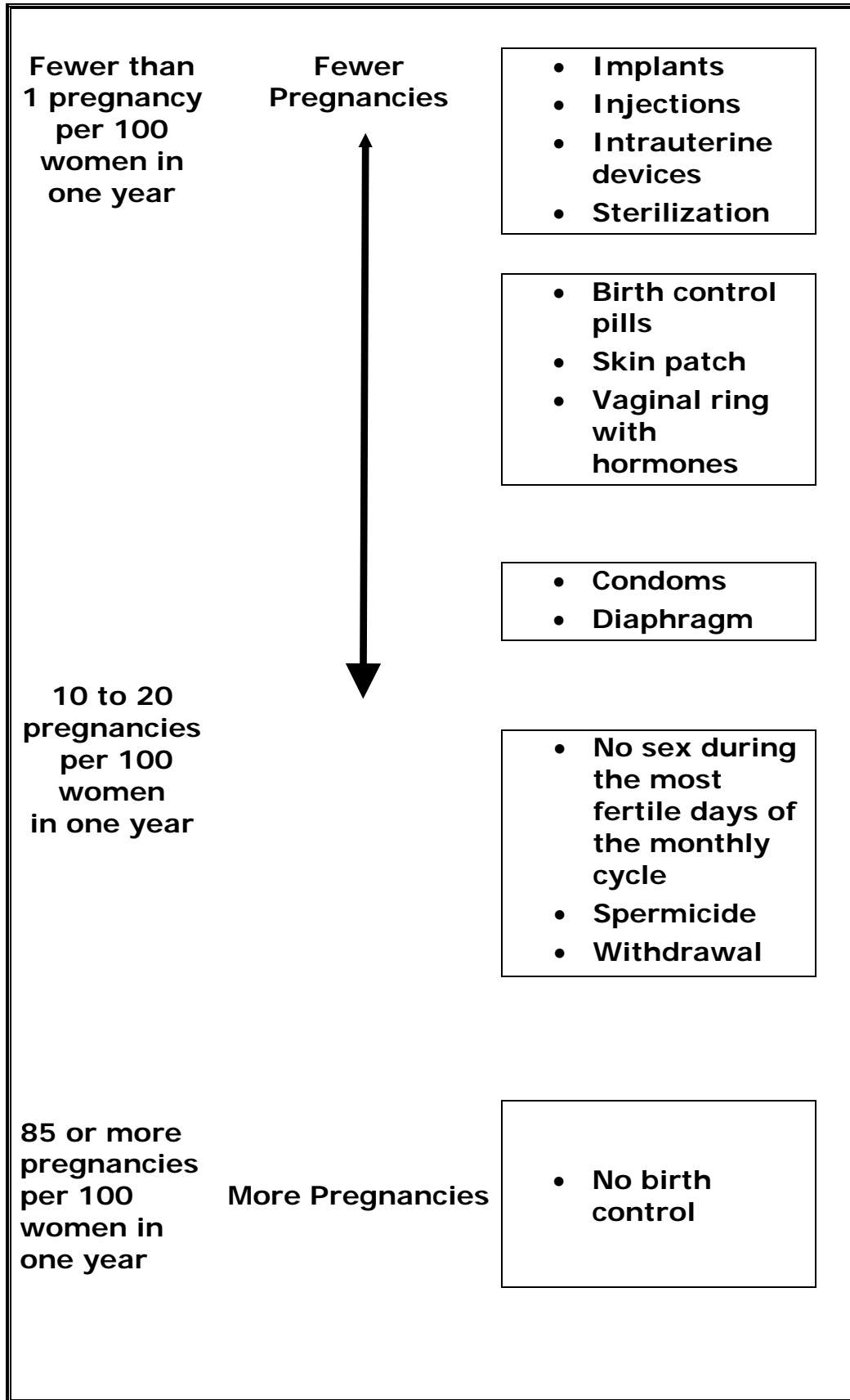
FEMCON Fe is a birth control pill (oral contraceptive) used by women to prevent pregnancy.

#### How does FEMCON Fe work for contraception?

Your chance of getting pregnant depends on how well you follow the directions for taking your birth control pills. The better you follow the directions, the less chance you have of getting pregnant.

Based on the results of one clinical study of a 28-day regimen of norethindrone 0.4 mg/ethinyl estradiol 35 mcg tablets, about 1 to 2 out of 100 women may get pregnant during the first year they use FEMCON Fe.

The following chart shows the chance of getting pregnant for women who use different methods of birth control. Each box on the chart contains a list of birth control methods that are similar in effectiveness. The most effective methods are at the top of the chart. The box on the bottom of the chart shows the chance of getting pregnant for women who do not use birth control and are trying to get pregnant.



## **Who should not take FEMCON Fe?**

### **Do not take FEMCON Fe if you:**

- smoke and are over 35 years of age
- had blood clots in your arms, legs, lungs, or eyes
- had a problem with your blood that makes it clot more than normal
- have certain heart valve problems or irregular heart beat that increases your risk of having blood clots
- had a stroke
- had a heart attack
- have high blood pressure that cannot be controlled by medicine
- have diabetes with kidney, eye, nerve, or blood vessel damage
- have certain kinds of severe migraine headaches with aura, numbness, weakness or changes in vision, or any migraine headaches if you are over 35 years of age
- have liver problems, including liver tumors
- have any unexplained vaginal bleeding
- are pregnant
- had breast cancer or any cancer that is sensitive to female hormones

**If any of these conditions happen while you are taking FEMCON Fe, stop taking FEMCON Fe right away and talk to your healthcare provider. Use non-hormonal contraception when you stop taking FEMCON Fe.**

## **What should I tell my healthcare provider before taking FEMCON Fe?**

### **Tell your healthcare provider if you:**

- are pregnant or think you may be pregnant
- are depressed now or have been depressed in the past
- had yellowing of your skin or eyes (jaundice) caused by pregnancy (cholestasis of pregnancy)
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. FEMCON Fe may decrease the amount of breast milk you make. A small amount of the hormones in FEMCON Fe may pass into your breast milk. Talk to your healthcare provider about the best birth control method for you while breastfeeding.

**Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take,** including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins and herbal supplements.

FEMCON Fe may affect the way other medicines work, and other medicines may affect how well FEMCON Fe works.

Know the medicines you take. Keep a list of them to show your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

### **How do I take FEMCON Fe?**

Read the **Instructions for Use** at the end of this Patient Information.

### **What are the possible serious side effects of FEMCON Fe?**

- **Like pregnancy, FEMCON Fe may cause serious side effects, including blood clots in your lungs, heart attack, or a stroke that may lead to death.** Some other examples of serious blood clots include blood clots in the legs or eyes.

Serious blood clots can happen especially if you smoke, are obese, or are older than 35 years of age. Serious blood clots are more likely to happen when you:

- first start taking birth control pills
- restart the same or different birth control pills after not using them for a month or more

**Call your healthcare provider or go to a hospital emergency room right away if you have:**

- leg pain that will not go away
- sudden severe shortness of breath
- sudden change in vision or blindness
- chest pain
- a sudden, severe headache unlike your usual headaches
- weakness or numbness in your arm or leg
- trouble speaking

**Other serious side effects include:**

- **liver problems, including:**
  - rare liver tumors
  - jaundice (cholestasis), especially if you previously had cholestasis of pregnancy. Call your healthcare provider if you have yellowing of your skin or eyes.
- **high blood pressure.** You should see your healthcare provider for a yearly check of your blood pressure.
- **gallbladder problems**
- **changes in the sugar and fat (cholesterol and triglycerides) levels in your blood**
- **new or worsening headaches including migraine headaches**
- **depression**
- **possible cancer in your breast and cervix**
- **swelling of your skin especially around your mouth, eyes, and in your throat (angioedema).** Call your healthcare provider if you have a swollen face, lips, mouth tongue or throat, which may lead to difficulty swallowing or breathing. Your chance of having angioedema is higher if you have a history of angioedema.
- **dark patches of skin around your forehead, nose, cheeks and around your mouth, especially during pregnancy (chloasma).** Women who tend to get chloasma should avoid spending a long time in sunlight, tanning booths, and under sun lamps while taking FEMCON Fe. Use sunscreen if you have to be in the sunlight.

## **What are the most common side effects of FEMCON Fe?**

The most common side effects of FEMCON Fe include:

- headache (including migraine)
- nausea and vomiting
- breast problems
  - tenderness, pain and discomfort
  - enlargement and swelling
  - discharge
  - nipple pain
- belly pain
- pain with your periods (menstrual cycle)
- mood changes, including depression
- acne
- vaginal infections
- bloating
- weight gain

These are not all the possible side effects of FEMCON Fe. For more information, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-FDA-1088.

## **What else should I know about taking FEMCON Fe?**

- If you are scheduled for any lab tests, tell your healthcare provider you are taking FEMCON Fe. Certain blood tests may be affected by FEMCON Fe.
- FEMCON Fe does not protect against HIV infection (AIDS) and other sexually transmitted infections.

## **How should I store FEMCON Fe?**

- Store FEMCON Fe at room temperature between 68°F to 77°F (20°C to 25°C).

- Keep FEMCON Fe and all medicines out of the reach of children.
- Store away from light.

### **General information about the safe and effective use of FEMCON Fe.**

Medicines are sometimes prescribed for purposes other than those listed in a Patient Information leaflet. Do not use FEMCON Fe for a condition for which it was not prescribed. Do not give FEMCON Fe to other people.

This Patient Information summarizes the most important information about FEMCON Fe. You can ask your pharmacist or healthcare provider for information about FEMCON Fe that is written for health professionals.

For more information, call Allergan at 1-800-678-1605.

### **Do birth control pills cause cancer?**

Birth control pills do not seem to cause breast cancer. However, if you have breast cancer now, or have had it in the past, do not use birth control pills because some breast cancers are sensitive to hormones.

Women who use birth control pills may have a slightly higher chance of getting cervical cancer. However, this may be due to other reasons such as having more sexual partners.

### **What if I want to become pregnant?**

You may stop taking the pill whenever you wish. Consider a visit with your healthcare provider for a pre-pregnancy checkup before you stop taking the pill.

### **What should I know about my period when taking FEMCON Fe?**

Your periods may be lighter and shorter than usual. Some women may miss a period. Irregular vaginal bleeding or spotting may happen while you are taking FEMCON Fe, especially during the first few months of use. This usually is not a serious problem. It is important to continue taking your pills on a regular schedule to prevent a pregnancy.

### **What are the ingredients in FEMCON Fe?**

**Active ingredients:**

White pills: norethindrone and ethinyl estradiol

Brown pills: ferrous fumarate

**Inactive ingredients:**

White pills: dibasic calcium phosphate, lactose, magnesium stearate, maltodextrin, povidone, sodium starch glycolate, spearmint flavor and sucralose

Brown pills: microcrystalline cellulose, magnesium stearate, povidone, sodium starch glycolate, and compressible sugar

## Instructions For Use

### FEMCON Fe [fě'm kon FE] (norethindrone and ethinyl estradiol tablets and ferrous fumarate tablets)

#### Important Information about taking FEMCON Fe

- Take **1** pill every day at the same time. Take the pills in the order directed on your blister pack.
- Both the white pills and the brown pills may be swallowed whole or chewed and swallowed. **If the pill is chewed, drink a full glass (8 ounces) of liquid immediately after swallowing.**
- Do not skip your pills, even if you do not have sex often. If you miss pills (including starting the pack late) **you could get pregnant**. The more pills you miss, the more likely you are to get pregnant.
- If you have trouble remembering to take FEMCON Fe, talk to your healthcare provider. When you first start taking FEMCON Fe, spotting or light bleeding in between your periods may occur. Contact your healthcare provider if this does not go away after a few months.
- You may feel sick to your stomach (nauseous), especially during the first few months of taking FEMCON Fe. If you feel sick to your stomach, do not stop taking the pill. The problem will usually go away. If your nausea does not go away, call your healthcare provider.
- Missing pills can also cause spotting or light bleeding, even when you take the missed pills later. On the days you take 2 pills to make up for missed pills (see below), you could also feel a little sick to your stomach.
- It is not uncommon to miss a period. However, if you miss a period and have not taken FEMCON Fe according to directions, or miss **2** periods in a row, or feel like you may be pregnant, call your healthcare provider. If you have a positive pregnancy test, you should stop taking FEMCON Fe.
- If you have vomiting or diarrhea within **3-4** hours of taking your pill, take another pill of the same color from your extra blister pack. If you do not have an extra blister pack, take the next pill in your blister pack.

Continue taking all your remaining pills in order. Start the first pill of your next blister pack the day after finishing your current blister pack. This will be 1 day earlier than originally scheduled. Continue on your new schedule.

- If you have vomiting or diarrhea for more than 1 day, your birth control pills may not work as well. Use an additional birth control method, like condoms and a spermicide, until you check with your healthcare provider.
- Stop taking FEMCON Fe at least **4** weeks before you have major surgery and do not restart after the surgery without asking your healthcare provider. Be sure to use other forms of contraception (like condoms and spermicide) during this time period.

**Before you start taking FEMCON Fe:**

- Decide what time of day you want to take your pill. It is important to take it at the same time every day and in the order as directed on your blister pack.
- Have backup contraception (condoms and spermicide) available and if possible, an extra full pack of pills as needed.

**When should I start taking FEMCON Fe?**

**If you start taking FEMCON Fe and you have not used a hormonal birth control method before:**

- There are 2 ways to start taking your birth control pills. You can either start on a Sunday (Sunday Start) or on the first day (Day 1) of your natural menstrual period (Day 1 Start). Your healthcare provider should tell you when to start taking your birth control pill.
- If you use the Sunday Start, use non-hormonal back-up contraception such as condoms and spermicide for the first **7** days that you take FEMCON Fe. You do not need back-up contraception if you use the Day 1 Start.

**If you start taking FEMCON Fe and you are switching from another birth control pill:**

- Start your new FEMCON Fe pack on the same day that you would start the next pack of your previous birth control method.
- Do not continue taking the pills from your previous birth control pack.

**If you start taking FEMCON Fe and previously used a vaginal ring or transdermal patch:**

- Start using FEMCON Fe on the day you would have reapplied the next ring or patch.

**If you start taking FEMCON Fe and you are switching from a progestin-only method such as an implant or injection:**

- Start taking FEMCON Fe on the day of removal of your implant or on the day when you would have had your next injection.

**If you start taking FEMCON Fe and you are switching from an intrauterine device or system (IUD or IUS):**

- Start taking FEMCON Fe on the day of removal of your IUD or IUS.
- You do not need back-up contraception if your IUD or IUS is removed on the first day (Day 1) of your period. If your IUD or IUS is removed on any other day, use non-hormonal back-up contraception such as condoms and spermicide for the first **7** days that you take FEMCON Fe.

**Keep a calendar to track your period:**

**If this is the first time** you are taking birth control pills, read, “**When should I start taking FEMCON Fe?**” above. Follow these instructions for either a **Sunday Start** or a **Day 1 Start**.

**Sunday Start:**

You will use a **Sunday Start** if your healthcare provider told you to take your first pill on a Sunday.

- Take pill **1** on the Sunday **after your period starts**.
- If your period starts on a Sunday, take pill “**1**” that day and refer to Day 1 Start instructions below.
- Take **1** pill every day in the order on the blister pack at the same time each day for **28** days.
- After taking the last pill on **Day 28** from the blister pack, start taking the first pill from a new pack, on the same day of the week as the first pack (Sunday). Take the first pill in the new pack whether or not you are

having your period.

- Use non-hormonal back-up contraception such as condoms and spermicide for the first **7** days of the first cycle that you take FEMCON FE.

### Day 1 Start:

You will use a **Day 1 Start** if your doctor told you to take your first pill (Day 1) on the **first day of your period**.

- Take **1** pill every day in the order of the blister pack, at the same time each day, for **28** days.
- After taking the last pill on **Day 28** from the blister pack, start taking the first pill from a new pack, on the same day of the week as the first pack. Take the first pill in the new pack whether or not you are having your period.

### Instructions for using your pill pack:

#### Step 1.

Look at your FEMCON Fe pill pack. **See Figure A.**

The FEMCON Fe pill pack has:

- **21** white (active) pills with hormone for **Week 1 through Week 3.**
- **7** brown (inactive) pills without hormones for **Week 4.**

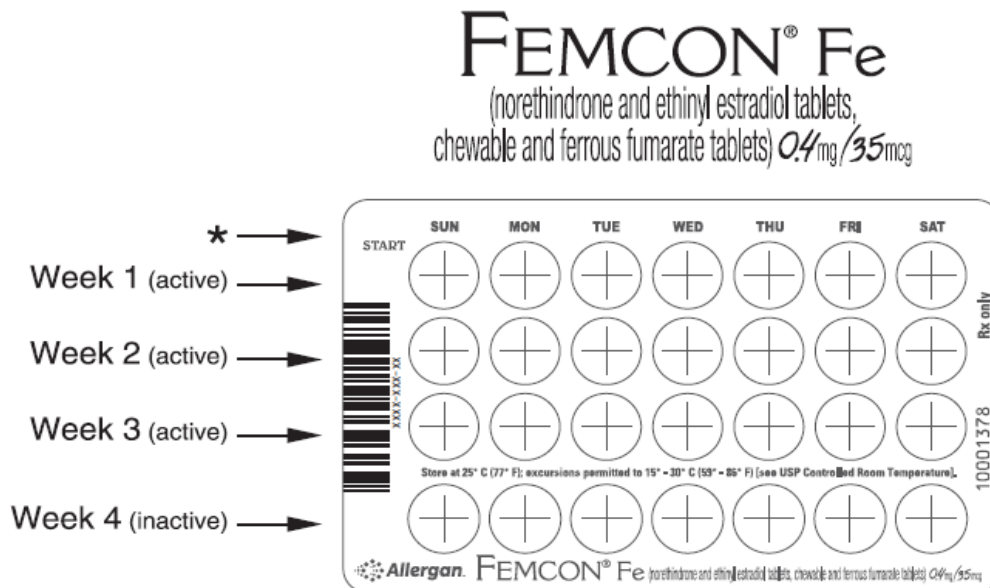


Figure A

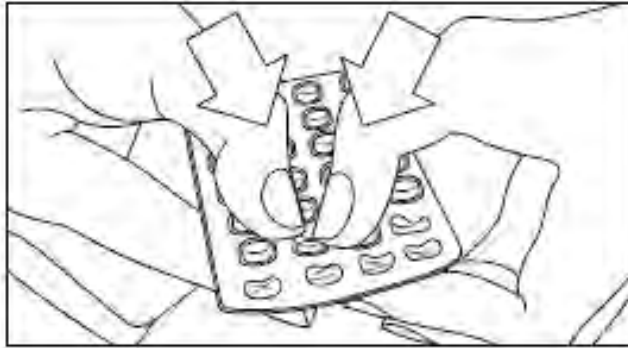
## Step 2.

Find:

- where on your pack to start taking pills
- in what order to take your pills (follow the arrows)
- the week numbers

## Step 3.

Remove the white pill by pressing the pill through the foil in the bottom of the pill pack. **See Figure B.** Continue taking the white pills for 21 days.



**Figure B**

## Step 4.

On the first day of **Week 4** start taking the brown pills. Take the brown pill for **7 days**. Your period should start during this time.

## Step 5.

When you have taken all of the brown pills in your pill pack, get a new pill pack and start taking the white pills.

- **For a Day 1 start:**  
Begin your next pill pack on the same day of the week as your first cycle pill pack.
- **For a Sunday Start:**  
Begin your next pill pack on Sunday.

## What should I do if I miss any FEMCON FE pills?

**If you miss 1 pill in Weeks 1, 2, or 3, follow these steps:**

- Take it as soon as you remember. Take the next pill at your regular time. This means you may take **2 pills in 1 day**.
- Then continue taking **1 pill every day** until you finish the pack.

- You do not need to use a back-up birth control method if you have sex.

**If you miss 2 pills in Week 1 or Week 2 of your pack, follow these steps:**

- Take the 2 missed pills as soon as possible and the next 2 pills the next day.
- Then continue to take **1** pill every day until you finish the pack.
- Use a non-hormonal birth control method (such as a condom and spermicide) as a back-up if you have sex during the first **7 days** after missing your pills.

**If you miss 2 pills in a row in Week 3, or you miss 3 or more pills in a row during Weeks 1, 2, or 3 of the pack, follow these steps:**

- **If you are a Day 1 Starter:**
  - Throw out the rest of the pill pack and start a new pack that same day.
- **If you are a Sunday Starter:**
  - Keep taking **1** pill every day until Sunday. On Sunday, throw out the rest of the pack and start a new pack of pills that same day.
- You may not have your period this month but this is expected. However, if you miss your period 2 months in a row, call your healthcare provider because you might be pregnant.
- You could become pregnant if you have sex during the first 7 days after you restart your pills. You **MUST** use a non-hormonal birth control method (such as a condom and spermicide) as a back-up if you have sex during the first 7 days after you restart your pills.

**If you have any questions or are unsure about the information in this leaflet, call your healthcare provider.**

This Patient Information and Instructions for Use has been approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

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