WHAT DO DOCTORS KNOW AND WOMEN DON’T?

– The IUC is a Preferred Contraceptive of Female Ob/Gyns in the U.S. –

Wayne NJ, October 25, 2006 – Intrauterine contraception (IUC) is very effective, with a failure rate of less than one percent (similar to that of sterilization), which is one reason why many female ob/gyns choose this method of birth control for themselves. In fact, research shows that female ob/gyns are nine times more likely to choose an IUC for themselves compared with women in general.¹ Misinformation and misperceptions about the IUC may have contributed to its limited use among women in the U.S. to date.

A recent national survey* released today reveals that as many as 50 percent of women are entirely unaware of the IUC and its potential benefits. More than 20 percent of women polled mistakenly believe that the IUC is not as effective as other methods of contraception, such as birth control pills or the patch, in terms of preventing pregnancy.²a In fact, the IUC Mirena® (levonorgestrel-releasing intrauterine system) is 99.9 percent effective and provides reliable protection for up to five years. If a woman should choose to try to become pregnant, Mirena can be removed at any time.

Clarifying Misperceptions

Many women surveyed were unaware of the additional benefits that an IUC may have on the menstrual cycle. For example, 28 percent of women polled believe that all IUCs cause heavier menstrual bleeding,²b when, in fact, Mirena thins the endometrial lining, resulting in shorter, lighter periods for many women. Women using the IUC Mirena may have up to a 90 percent reduction in bleeding and approximately 20 percent of women using Mirena experience no period at all after one year.

*The survey, conducted by International Communications Research (ICR) based out of Media, Pennsylvania, polled approximately 330 women ages 18 to 49 years in the United States. The random-sample survey was conducted via telephone from March 24 - April 6, 2006.
The survey also found there is a large disparity between what women want from their birth control and their understanding of available options that might meet those needs, such as an IUC. For example, more than half of the women surveyed (56 percent) did not know that Mirena, the hormone releasing IUC, actually delivers lower and steadier hormone levels than the birth control pill.2c

**Keeping Options Open**

The survey also revealed misconceptions about IUC use and fertility. More than one-third of the women polled erroneously believe that an IUC can cause a woman to become sterile.2d In reality, an IUC can be easily removed and is not a permanent form of contraception. When an IUC is removed, the one-year fertility rate is the same as for women who had not been using any form of birth control, a fact that more than 50 percent of the women polled did not realize or did not believe.2e

“Women should be counseled about all of their contraceptive options. All too often, I hear women feel their only choices are condoms or the birth control pill,” said Mary Jane Minkin, MD, Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Yale Medical School. “Women are missing out on the facts about a reliable and safe method that we doctors choose more often for ourselves.”

**Cost Effective and Convenient**

Research shows that intrauterine contraception is the most cost-effective option when compared to all other birth control methods after one year of use.3 However, according to the recent survey, 43 percent of women either were unaware or did not believe that an IUC is a cost-effective form of contraception.2f

Additionally, many women did not realize that in general, IUC insertion and removal are routine and take place in a health care provider’s office. As many as 42 percent of women reported that they did not know or did not believe that an IUC insertion took only a few minutes.2g

“Intrauterine contraception is a very viable option, particularly for women interested in reversible birth control that is hassle-free,” Dr. Minkin said. “And because it is removable, Mirena eliminates the potential regret that often comes with sterilization.”
About Mirena®

Mirena (levonorgestrel-releasing intrauterine system) is a removable intrauterine contraceptive (IUC). Mirena provides up to five years of birth control (or less if the woman chooses) that is 99.9 percent effective. Mirena is a reversible intrauterine contraception that is as effective as sterilization. Mirena is safe, estrogen-free and, upon removal, the one-year fertility rate is the same for women who had not been using any form of birth control.

Mirena is recommended for women who have had at least one child, are in a stable, mutually monogamous relationship, have no history of pelvic inflammatory disease, and have no history of ectopic pregnancy or condition that would predispose to ectopic pregnancy.

While only a woman and her doctor can determine whether Mirena is right for her, most women who have a child are typically good candidates for Mirena. You should not use Mirena if you are at risk for or have a history of ectopic pregnancy or pelvic inflammatory disease. Common side effects may include missed menstrual periods or irregular bleeding or spotting for the first three-to-six months. Thereafter, most women will experience shorter, lighter periods. Some women may develop a cyst on their ovaries. These cysts usually disappear on their own in a month or two. Mirena does not protect against HIV (AIDS) and other sexually transmitted diseases.

About Berlex, Inc.

Berlex is committed to addressing unmet medical needs through research and development in the areas of oncology, gastroenterology, women’s health diagnostics and neurology. Berlex also markets diagnostic imaging agents, innovative treatments in the areas of female healthcare and oncology, as well as specialized therapeutics for life-threatening and disabling diseases of the central nervous system and cardiovascular system. Berlex has business operations in New Jersey, California and Washington. For more information, please visit www.berlex.com.

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