

Menstrual Disorders: When Missing A Period Becomes A Health Risk

(NAPSA)—Getting a monthly menstrual period is a fact of life that many women would rather avoid, but a woman's regular cycle is one way to know for sure that she's healthy. Missing a period for any woman should cause some concern if she knows that it's not due to pregnancy.

Secondary amenorrhea (SA) is a condition in which a woman's menstrual period begins at the appropriate age, but later stops for at least three normal menstrual cycles or six months. SA affects an estimated four percent of the U.S. population.

Commonly caused by over-exercise, eating disorders, endocrine or pituitary disorders, certain medications and obesity, research shows that SA is also a frequent symptom for women who are experiencing perimenopause—the transitional phase before menstruation ceases with menopause.

SA occurs when there is an absence or imbalance of the sex hormones estrogen and progesterone. These hormones work together throughout a woman's life to ensure that the reproductive cycle functions properly.

In perimenopause, levels of these important hormones fluctuate unpredictably, often resulting in lower levels of progesterone.

According to Lila Nachtigall, M.D., professor of obstetrics and gynecology at the New York University School of Medicine and director of the NYU Medical Center's Women's Wellness Center, every woman will experience perimenopause at some point in her life.

"It's important to note that it is not normal for menstruation to stop prematurely in any woman," says Dr. Nachtigall. "Missed periods, which occur with SA, predispose a woman to endometrial hyperplasia, a potentially pre-cancerous condition."

SA is usually treated with natural or synthetic progesterone, available in oral formulations and injections. Now, women who suffer from SA have another natural



treatment option. Prochieve™ 4% (progesterone gel) is a vaginally-delivered progesterone gel indicated for the treatment of SA.

"Treating secondary amenorrhea with vaginal progesterone gel is a safe option for many women because it delivers the hormone right to the uterus where it's needed, minimizing systemic side effects," says Dr. Nachtigall.

Prochieve 4% is a safe treatment option for women of reproductive age and is not contraindicated in pregnancy. The most common side effects of Prochieve 4% when used in combination with estrogen include cramps, fatigue, depression, emotional lability, sleep disorder and headache. Prochieve 4% is contraindicated in patients with current or active thrombophlebitis or thromboembolic disorders, or a history of hormone-associated thrombophlebitis or thromboembolic disorders, missed abortion, undiagnosed vaginal bleeding, liver dysfunction or disease, and known or suspected malignancy of the breast or genital organs.

Prochieve 4%, containing 45 mg of natural progesterone, utilizes a patented Bioadhesive Delivery System to deliver the hormone in an easy-to-use, pre-filled, tampon-like applicator. Because it is designed to adhere to the vaginal tissue, there is minimal leakage of the active ingredient; therefore, it does not restrict normal activities. If your period has stopped, you should visit your OB/GYN for an accurate diagnosis and treatment.

Visit www.columbialabs.com for full prescribing information.