Questions for Drug Interactions and Hormonal Contraception

The following questions and answers have been developed by the FFPRHC Education Committee.

1. Antibiotics, which alter colonic bacteria, affect both combined oral contraception (COC) and oral progestogen-only methods.
2. Women using COC who are prescribed a short course of rifampicin for meningococcal meningitis prophylaxis should be advised to use additional contraception during the course and for 4 weeks afterwards.
3. The Summary of Product Characteristics for depot medroxyprogesterone acetate advises that it is unaffected by liver enzyme-inducing drugs.
4. Women using liver enzyme-inducing drugs may choose to use COC provided that they: (a) have been counselled about all other contraceptive methods, (b) use a regimen with at least 50 μg ethinylestradiol daily and (c) are advised to use additional contraceptive protection, such as condoms, until 4 weeks after the liver enzyme-inducing drug has been stopped.
5. Women using liver enzyme-inducing drugs who require emergency contraception and decline an intrauterine device (IUD) should be advised to increase the dose of progestogen-only emergency contraception by 50%, i.e. to three tablets (2.25 mg levonorgestrel).
6. Women using liver enzyme-inducing drugs who require a long-term reversible method of contraception should be advised that the levonorgestrel-releasing intrauterine system and IUDs are unaffected, but that the efficacy of the progestogen-only implant may be reduced.
7. The Committee on Safety of Medicines advises caution for women using COC, progestogen-only pills and progestogen-only implants who wish to use St John’s Wort as it may be an enzyme inducer.
8. Women using COC should be advised to use additional contraceptive protection when taking a short course (<3 weeks) of antibiotics for the duration of treatment and for 14 days afterwards.
9. A woman who is an established user of antibiotics does not need to use additional contraceptive protection if she changes to a different antibiotic.
10. If a woman vomits 3 hours after ingesting an oral hormonal contraceptive a further dose is required.

Answers

1 False 2 True 3 True 4 True 5 True 6 True 7 True 8 False 9 False 10 False