

Directions for the Use of Oral Contraceptives

The birth control pill is 99% effective in preventing pregnancy if taken correctly. Birth control pills DO NOT protect you from sexually transmitted diseases.

When do I start taking the pill?

You have 2 options for starting:

1. Begin taking your pill on the first day of your menstrual cycle, whatever day of the week that happens, or
2. Begin taking your pill on the first Sunday after your period starts.

Important! Use a back-up method of contraception (condoms) or abstain from intercourse for the first month after beginning a birth control pill or when switching from one birth control pill to another.

What do I do if I miss a pill?

If you miss one pill, take it as soon as you remember. If you do not remember until the next day, take two at the same time.

If you miss two pills, take two birth control pills as soon as you remember and then resume daily pills. Abstain from intercourse or use another method of birth control for the remainder of that pill cycle.

If three pills are missed, call the office for further instructions. Abstain from intercourse or use another method of birth control for the remainder of that pill cycle.

Anticipated side effects:

It is not unusual to have "break-through bleeding" (bleeding between your periods) on the pill. If the BTB increases, persists, or becomes more frequent call us to discuss. Some women may also experience mild breast tenderness, mood changes, weight gain, acne, decreased sex drive, and/or mild nausea on the pill. For most women, these symptoms will improve after the first three months of a new birth control pill regimen. Call during office hours to discuss if you experience these symptoms severely and need to change your pill.

Warning:

The pill can be associated with the following medical conditions: blood clot, heart attack, stroke, high blood pressure, gall bladder disease, liver disease. You can reduce your risk of a blood clot, heart attack, high blood pressure, and stroke by (1) discussing your medical history with your provider prior to starting the pill, (2) by not smoking cigarettes while you are taking the pill. The pill is not recommended for smokers who are 35 years or older and therefore we will not prescribe them.

Call at once if you experience any of the following ACHES after beginning or while taking a hormonal contraceptive:

- A: sudden onset of moderate to severe abdominal pain
- C: Sudden chest pain
- H: Severe headaches, new headaches, or worsening of pre-existing headaches
- E: Eye pain, loss of vision, or blurring of vision
- S: severe leg pain or swelling.

Other symptoms to report immediately include:

- Numbness or tingling of your arms or legs
- Heavy vaginal bleeding (soaking through more than 1 pad/tampon per hour)

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Note:

We do not refill birth control pills on the weekends or after hours. Please call during office hours and stay up-to-date on your exams and your refills.