

A. TAKING YOUR BIRTH CONTROL PILLS CORRECTLY:

1. Take your first pill on the day your provider instructed you to begin.
2. Take one pill each day at about the same time each day until you have taken the pills in one cycle pack.
3. If you have a 21-day pack, take all 21 pills, then stop for one week. If you are using a 28-day pack, you will end your pack and start a new one the next day.
4. Always start your new cycle of pills on the same day of the week. **EXAMPLE: IF YOU STARTED CYCLE 1 ON A SUNDAY, YOU WILL START A NEW CYCLE 4 WEEKS LATER ON A SUNDAY.**
5. As long as you are on the pill, continue taking them in this way.

B. TO PREVENT AN UNPLANNED PREGNANCY BEFORE BIRTH CONTROL PILLS BECOME EFFECTIVE:

1. Use extra protection during at least the first week or even the first cycle of the pill.
2. After that, you will be protected from pregnancy as long as you remember to take your pill each day.

C. IF YOU FORGET TO TAKE YOUR PILLS:

1. If you forget to take your pill at the regular time, take the pill as soon as you remember.
2. If you do not remember until the next day, take the forgotten pill, and then take that day's pill at the regular time.
3. If you forget your pills for two days in a row, take the alst pill you missed now. Take the rest of the pack as usual. Use an additional method of birth control for the next 7 days. If you have had unprotected sex in the past 5 days, you may want to use Emergency Contraception. Seek advice at (909) 869-4000

D. DANGER SIGNALS - THESE ARE THE "ACHES" OF CONCERN AND SHOULD BE EVALUATED IMMEDIATELY:

- A** - Abdominal Pain
- C** - Chest Pain
- H** - Headaches
- E** - Eyes - Change in Vision
- S** - Severe Leg Cramps

REMEMBER: *Talk to your clinician if you have any questions about the pill.*

(Cont. on Back)



ABOUT THE PILL

What is it? A monthly series of birth control pills, which contains hormones similar to those produced in a woman's body. There are two classes of pills:

1. The standard pill contains estrogen and progesterone in a combination that prevents ovulation.
2. The progesterone-only pill. (This pill is not offered at Student Health Services)

Major Concerns: Women often have 3 major concerns about oral contraceptives: 1) cancer; 2) problems with future childbearing and 3) risk of heart attacks, strokes and blood clots.

1. Studies have shown that, rather than causing cancer, the pill may have a protective effect against some cancers. For example, there are fewer cancers of the uterus, colon and of the ovaries among pill users.
2. The pill does not cause infertility. It does not increase the danger of birth defects in infants in future pregnancies.
3. The risk of heart attacks, strokes and blood clots is extremely small (less than 1 per 10,000 women. If one is over 35 years of age and/or smokes the risk is higher. Other risk factors are high blood pressure, diabetes and liver disease. These conditions require special counseling by a physician.

Advantages: It is convenient to use, safe and effective (92-99% effective) at preventing pregnancy.

- ☞ The pill usually reduces the amount of menstrual bleeding; it usually prevents heavy or irregular bleeding as well.
- ☞ Because there is less bleeding, anemia is less common.
- ☞ The pill may be effective in reducing premenstrual syndrome and menstrual cramping.
- ☞ Patients taking the pill have fewer ovarian cysts and are less likely to develop pelvic inflammatory disease.
- ☞ The pill is effective in reducing tubal pregnancies as well as normal pregnancies.

Minor Problems: Usually occur in the first 3 months of use; usually are temporary and will be discussed during the 3 month recheck visit with clinician.

1. Breast tenderness: This is usually mild and may disappear in a few months.
2. Nausea: This is infrequent and usually disappears in a few months now that the lower dose pill is being used; can be minimized by taking the pill with food or near mealtime.
3. Weight gain or loss: Very uncommon and usually due to something other than the pill.
4. Spotting between menses: The most common cause is forgetting to take one or more pills. Sometimes a change in the dose or the type of pill is required.

Who Can Use It? Women who are young and healthy can use the pill safely with almost no risk of developing serious complications. As a comparison, riding in an automobile is MUCH more dangerous than taking the pill.

Clinician: _____