

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES

Important Points to Remember Before Starting Pills

1. Read these instructions before starting pills and anytime you are not sure what to do.
2. The correct way to take the pill is to take one pill every day at the same time, if you miss pills you could get pregnant.
This includes starting the pack late. The more pills you miss, the more likely you are to get pregnant.
3. Many women have spotting or light bleeding, or may feel nauseated during the first one to three packs of pills. Do not stop taking the pill. The problem will usually go away by the third month. If not, check with the office.
4. Missing pills can also cause spotting or light bleeding even when you make up these missed pills. On the days you take two pills to make up for the missed pills, you could also feel nauseated.
5. If you have vomiting or diarrhea or if you take some medicines including some antibiotics your pills may not be as effective. Use a backup method such as condoms until you check with the office.
6. If you have trouble remembering to take the pill, call so we can assist you in making pill taking easier or help you with another method of birth control.

When You're Ready to Start the Pill for the First Time

1. Decide what time of day you want to take your pill. Nighttime may be the best in many situations. It is important to take it at the same time every day.
2. Locate on the pack where to start, in what order to take the pills, and the week numbers. This is generally self-explanatory by following the arrows on the pack.
3. Be sure to have a backup method of birth control to use in case of missed pills.

When to Start the First Pack

1. "Sunday Start": Take the first pill of the first pack on the Sunday after your period starts even if you are still bleeding. If your period begins on Sunday, start the pack that same day. Use a backup method during the first two weeks of the pill with this method as it may take this long for the full contraceptive benefit.
2. "Day 1 Start": Take the first pill of the first pack during the first 24 hours of your period. You will not need to use a backup method of birth control since you are starting the pill at the beginning of your period. Some birth control pill packs are automatically labeled with Sunday as the first pill so if using this method you may be off by a few days from the labeled day.

What to Do During the Month

1. Take one pill at the same time every day until the pack is empty. Do not skip pills, even if you do not have sex very often or if you bleed.
2. When you finish a pack or switch your brand of pills start the next pack on the day after your last reminder or sugar pill. Do not wait any days between packs.

What to Do If You Miss Pills

1. If you miss one active pill, take it as soon as you remember. Take the next pill at your regular time. This may mean that you will take two pills in one day. You do not need to use a backup method of birth control.
2. If you miss two active pills in a row in week 1 or week 2 of your pack, take two pills on the day you remember and two pills the next day. Then take one pill a day until you finish the pack. You may become

pregnant if you have sex in the seven days after you miss pills. You must use another birth control method as a backup for those 7 days.

3. If you miss two active pills in a row in week 3:
 - A. And you are a Sunday Starter: Keep taking one pill every day until Sunday. On Sunday, throw out the rest of the pack and start a new pack of pills that same day.
 - B. And you are a Day 1 Starter: Throw out the rest of the pill pack and start a new pack that same day.
 - C. You may not have your period this month, but this is expected. However, if you miss your period 2 months in a row, call to be evaluated for pregnancy.
 - D. You may become pregnant if you have sex in the 7 days after you miss pills. You must use a backup method of birth control during this time.
4. If you miss three or more active pills in a row during the first 3 weeks:
 - A. And you are a Sunday Starter: Keep taking one pill every day until Sunday. On Sunday, throw out the rest of the pack and start a new pack of pills the same day.
 - B. And you are a Day 1 Starter: Throw out the rest of the pill pack and start a new pack that same day.
 - C. You may not have your period this month, but this is expected. However if you miss your period 2 months in a row, call to be evaluated for pregnancy.
 - D. You may become pregnant if you have sex in the seven days after you miss pills. You must use a backup method of birth control during this time.

Other Important Things You Should Know About Oral Contraceptives

1. You should report any new or unusual medical problems to your clinician right away even if you feel it's unrelated to the birth control pill.
2. Between 1 and 2% of women will not menstruate for 6 months or more after stopping birth control pills, if you do not have your period, return for a pregnancy test.
3. If your periods are irregular prior to taking pills, they may again become irregular after you stop the pill.
4. The estrogen hormone in the pill slightly decreases the quality and quantity of breast milk. Some experts advise against combined birth control pills while breast feeding if other methods are available.
5. While oral contraceptives are highly effective against pregnancy they do not provide any protection against sexually transmitted diseases such as Gonorrhea, Chlamydia, HIV or Venereal Warts. If you or any of your sexual partners have other partners, it is very important to use a latex condom every time you have sex in order to protect yourself against these infections.