



The Pill Fact Sheet

How do birth control pills work? Birth control pills contain hormones like the ones your body makes. These hormones stop your ovaries from releasing eggs. Without an egg, you cannot get pregnant. No method of birth control is 100% effective. The pill is 91% effective.

HOW DO I START THE PILL?

There are 2 ways to start the pill:

Quick Start: Take your first pill as soon as you get the pack.

Next period: Take your first pill soon after your next period begins.

- If you take your first pill up to 5 days after the start of your period, you are protected against pregnancy right away.
- If you take your first pill more than 5 days after the start of your period, you should use condoms as back-up for the first 7 days.

HOW DO I USE THE PILL?

Once you start using the pill, take 1 pill each day. Take your pill at the same time each day. After you finish a pack of pills, you should start a new pack the next day. **You should have NO day without a pill.**

WHAT IF I MISS PILLS?

I forgot ONE pill: Take your pill as soon as you can.

I forgot TWO pills or more: Take your pill as soon as you can. Take your next pill at the usual time. Use condoms for 7 days. Use emergency contraception (EC) if you have unprotected sex.

WHAT IF I STOPPED TAKING THE PILL AND HAD UNPROTECTED SEX?

Take Emergency Contraception (EC) right away. EC can prevent pregnancy up to 5 days after sex, and it works better the sooner you take it.

HOW DOES THE PILL HELP ME?

The pill is a safe and effective birth control. Your periods may be more regular, lighter, and shorter. You may have clearer skin. The pill lowers your risk of getting cancer of the uterus and ovaries. The pill has **no effect** on your ability to get pregnant in the future after you stop taking it.

HOW WILL I FEEL ON THE PILL?

You will feel about the same. In the first 2-3 months you may have nausea, bleeding between periods, weight change, and/or breast pain. These problems often go away after 2-3 months.

DOES THE PILL HAVE RISKS?

The pill is very safe. Serious problems are rare. If you have any of the symptoms below, call your health provider.

- Leg pain, swelling, and redness
- Weakness or numbness on one side of your body
- Bad headache
- Vision problems
- Chest pain

Your clinician can help you determine if these symptoms are signs of a serious problem.

Remember, the pill does not protect you from Sexually Transmitted Infections or HIV.
Always use condoms to protect yourself!