The Pill
Birth Control for Women

The birth control pill is a combined hormonal contraceptive containing two hormones, estrogen and progestin. These hormones help to prevent pregnancy by:

- inhibiting ovulation
- producing thicker cervical secretion which acts as a physical barrier to sperm

How well does the pill work?
Only 3 women in 1,000 will become pregnant if the pill is used correctly and consistently or 99.7% effective. However, failure rate with typical use is 8%.

Other Medications and the Pill
The following medications and supplements may interfere with the effectiveness of the Pill. We recommend that women using these medications use another birth control method while on these medications and for 7 days after completing them.

- Anticonvulsants; Some Antibiotics; St. John’s Wort; Provigil

Benefits of the Pill

- reduced risk of ovarian cancer
- reduced risk of uterine cancer
- menstrual regularity
- less anemia
- lighter periods
- fewer ovarian cysts
- less painful periods
- improvement in acne
- fewer ectopic pregnancies
- reduction in PMS

Pill Risks
There is a slight increased risk of developing blood clots when using the Pill. When blood clots occur, they usually first develop in a lower leg and are a potentially life threatening side effect which can lead to heart attack, stroke or lung complications. 1.2 to 2 women in 10,000 that are on the Pill will develop a blood clot.

If you experience any of these symptoms, see your clinician, return to the clinic or go to the nearest Emergency Room immediately. Do not wait for these symptoms to get better.

- severe abdominal pain
- shortness of breath or chest pain
- severe and sudden headache
- sudden eyesight problems
- pain or swelling in calf, thigh or groin

Additional side effects from the Pill are not life threatening, but may be serious:

- high blood pressure
- gallbladder disease

Pill Side Effects
Minor side effects are more likely the first 3 cycles of a new Pill and tend to resolve by the 4th cycle. Minor side effects of the Pill that could occur:

- mood changes
- breast tenderness
- spotting between periods
- decreased menstrual flow
- skin changes

Special Warnings about Yasmin/Ocella and Yaz
The progestin in Yasmin/Ocella and Yaz is different from other birth control pills. It can raise the potassium levels in the blood which can lead to heart and other health problems. Regular, daily use of NSAID’s such as ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin) and some other medications are not safe to take with Yasmin/Ocella or Yaz.

Starting the Pill
There are 3 ways to start your first package of Pills.

1) **Today Start**: Start your first pill today. Use another birth control method for the first 7 days of your first pack.

2) **Sunday Start**: Take your first Pill on the Sunday after the first day of your next period. If your period starts on Sunday, take your first pill that day. Use another birth control method for the first 7 days of your first pack.

3) **First Day Start**: Take your first pill during the first 24 hours of your next period. No other birth control is needed.
Taking the Pill

- Take 1 pill every day about the same hour each day.
- When you finish the last pill in your pack, start a new package the next day.
- Your period should start sometime during the 4th row of Pills. These Pills are the placebo pills and are a different color. You are still protected from pregnancy during this week.

Missed Pills

Use Plan B (emergency contraception) if you have had unprotected intercourse in the past 5 days. Then take two birth control Pills the following day and return to daily use for the rest of the pack. Use condoms the first 7 days after restarting the Pill. If you do not have a risk of pregnancy, take 2 birth control Pills the day after you realize you have missed Pills and return to daily Pill use afterward. Use condoms the first 7 days after restarting the Pill.

Taking the Pill to have Fewer Periods

Skipping the placebo week of one pack of Pills and starting a new package of Pills instead is a safe way to skip a period or have fewer periods. Spotting is a common, but not serious side effect of skipping the placebo week. Some tips for successful extended use:

- Use a monophasic birth control Pill. A monophasic pill means that the formula of the active pills is the same and all of the active pills are the same color.
- If you have light spotting, continue the active pills, the spotting may self-resolve
- If spotting does not improve or if it gets heavier after a few days and you have taken at least 3 weeks of active pills, stop the active pills for 3 days; you will have a period for those days. Then restart the active Pills even if you still have some bleeding.
- If bleeding is heavier or more painful than a normal period call or seek evaluation.

Test Results and Advice Nurse

Please call the nurse for test results and advice: 863-4463

Appointments

Appointments can be made online via the UHS website, by phone or in person. If you are unable to keep your appointment, please call and cancel. Otherwise you will be charged for the visit.

To schedule or cancel appointments call 863-0774 or schedule your appointment online through the UHS website.

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