

# All about the Birth Control Pill

The Birth Control Pill is a small pill a woman takes every day to keep from getting pregnant.

The pill has two kinds of hormones like the ones made in a woman's body. These hormones keep the woman's eggs from leaving her ovaries. There are many kinds of birth control pills with different amounts of these hormones in them.



There are many types of birth control pills.

## How does the Pill work?

Every day at the same time the woman takes one pill. The pills she takes for the first three weeks have hormones in them. The hormones stay at the level needed to keep her from getting pregnant. With some kinds of pills, the pills at the end of the pack have no hormones. In others, all of the pills have hormones.

## How well does it work?

The pill is very good at keeping women from getting pregnant. Only about 9 women out of 100 who use the pill for a year get pregnant.

## How do I get the Pill?

A Family PACT provider can help. Tell your provider about:

- ◆ Any health problems you may have.
- ◆ Any medicine you may be taking.

Your provider can help you decide if the pill is right for you. There are many kinds of pills. If one is not right for you, another one might be.

## What do women like about using the Pill?

- ◆ It does not interrupt having sex.
- ◆ It can help a woman know when she is going to have her periods.
- ◆ It can lessen the cramps and heavy bleeding that some women have during their periods.
- ◆ It can also help lessen acne and prevent breast cysts.



The woman takes a pill every day.

## What do some women dislike?

- ◆ You must remember to take the pill at the same time every day.
- ◆ Some women may have problems with side effects.

## The Pill may not be safe for some women to use.

Talk with your Family PACT provider about medications that you take or health problems you may have. For example:

- ◆ Migraine headaches
- ◆ You are over 35 years old and smoke
- ◆ Have a history of blood clots, heart disease, stroke
- ◆ Are being treated for high blood pressure or diabetes
- ◆ Have a history of breast cancer or liver disease

## How do I use the Pill?

Start taking your pills the day your Family PACT provider says. Your provider may tell you to take the first pill on the same day of your visit.

- ◆ Take one pill every day until the whole pack is gone.
- ◆ Take your pills at the same time every day.

Find a way to remember to take your pill every day. For example, you could take your pill right after you brush your teeth in the morning.

For the first 7 days after you start to take the pill, use another method, like condoms, every time you have sex. This will help protect you while you get used to taking the pill.

You may not want to get your period each month. You can choose to skip the week of hormone-free pills. When you finish your third week of pills, you would start a new pack of pills. Or you can use pills packaged to do this. Talk to your provider to learn more.

## What about side effects?

Some side effects of the pill are:

- ◆ Spotting and bleeding between periods
- ◆ Nausea
- ◆ Breast tenderness
- ◆ Mood changes
- ◆ Changes in sex drive

## Watch for these warning signs.

Call your provider right away if you have:

- ◆ Sudden headaches
- ◆ Eye problems (blurry vision)
- ◆ Sharp, sudden pain in the leg, chest or abdomen

## What do I do if I miss any pills?

### One late or missed pill (up to 48 hours):

- ◆ Take late or missed pill as soon as you can
- ◆ Also, keep taking a pill every day at the regular time
- ◆ No need to use a backup method
- ◆ You may want to use emergency contraception (EC) if you have missed pills earlier in the same pack, or if you missed pills during the last week of the previous pack.

### Two or more missed pills:

- ◆ Take only one pill as soon as you can, throw away other missed pills
- ◆ Also, keep taking a pill every day at the regular time
- ◆ Use a backup method like condoms until the hormonal pills have been taken for 7 continuous days
- ◆ If you missed pills during the third week of the pack, finish the hormonal pills, then go right to the hormonal pills of the next pack. In other words, when you get to the spacer pills, skip them altogether and start the next pack.
- ◆ You may want to use EC if:
  - You missed two or more pills during the first week of the pack **AND** had unprotected sex during the previous 5 days
  - You should not use UPA (Ella) EC pills and birth control pills at the same time

The Birth Control Pill does not protect you from HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) and other infections that people get from having sex.

Use condoms (for men or women) along with the Pill to protect yourself from these infections.