



Birth Control Pill Fact Sheet

Women's Clinic (850) 644-6230

Starting the pill.

You can start the pill any time in your menstrual cycle if you are sure you are not pregnant.

- If you start the pill on the first day of your period you will be protected from pregnancy immediately.
- You can also begin the pill pack the Sunday after you begin bleeding.
- You can also start the pill up to, and including, the fifth day of your period and you will be protected from pregnancy immediately.
- If you start the pill at any other time in your menstrual cycle you will need to use additional contraception, such as condoms, for the first 7 days of pill taking.

If you forget to take a pill or start a pack late

- Missing pills or starting the pack late may make your pill less effective. The chance of pregnancy after missing pills depends on when pills are missed and how many pills are missed. A pill is late when you have forgotten to take it at the usual time. A pill has been missed when it is more than 24 hours since the time you should have taken it.
- If you miss one pill anywhere in your pack or start the new pack 1 day late, you will still have contraceptive coverage. However, missing two or more pills or starting the pack two or more days late (more than 48 hours late) may affect your contraceptive coverage. In particular, during the pill-free break your ovaries are not getting any effects from the pill. If you make this pill-free break longer by forgetting two or more pills, your ovaries might release an egg, and there is a real risk of becoming pregnant. As soon as you realize you have missed any pills, take the last pill you missed immediately.
- Follow the advice below. If you are not sure what to do, continue to take your pill and use additional contraception, such as condoms, and seek advice as soon as possible.

If you have missed one pill, anywhere in the pack:

- Take the last pill you missed now even if it means taking two pills in 1 day
- Continue taking the rest of the pack as usual
- No additional contraception needed
- Take your entire pack as normal.

If you have missed two or more pills (i.e. more than 48 hours late), anywhere in the pack:

- Take the last pill you missed now, even if it means taking two pills in 1 day-Space the pills at least four hours apart to decrease nausea.
- Leave any earlier missed pills
- Continue taking the rest of the pack as usual and use an extra method of contraception for the next 7 days
- You may need emergency contraception – see below
- You may need to start the next pack of pills without a break – see below.

Emergency contraception

- If you have missed two or more pills and have had sex without a condom, you may need emergency contraception, to be taken within 3 days. If you have questions call our clinic or ask your pharmacist for over the counter (OTC) medication.
- **Studies have reported decreased effectiveness of OTC medication in patients with body weights of more than 165 lbs.**
- Prescription medication (Ella) is more likely to be effective in patients with higher body weights if taken within 5 days. Please contact clinic as soon as possible after unprotected sex for an appointment.
- The most effective option to prevent pregnancy is placement of copper releasing IUD during the 5 days after unprotected intercourse. This is not available at UHS Women's Clinic.

Starting the next pack after missing two or more pills (more than 48 hours late)

If **seven or more** pills are left in the pack after the last missed pill:

- Finish the pack
- Have the usual pill free break.

If **less than seven** pills are left in the pack after missing two or more pills:

- Finish the pack and begin a new one the next day (this means missing out the break).

Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) combined oral contraception Combined Oral Contraceptive (COC) Pill Advice 201124

What's normal: Spotting, mild nausea, and breast tenderness may occur in the first two to three packs. If they continue after your first three packs, make an appointment to discuss changing your prescription.

Serious symptoms: Severe abdominal pain, chest pain, shortness of breath, severe headaches, vision loss or blurring vision, numbness or severe pain in the arms or legs. If any of these symptoms occur, stop taking your pills and return to your clinician or go to the emergency room as soon as possible.

Smoking increases the risk of serious side effects while taking birth control pill. If you smoke, **STOP**. Birth control pills offer no protection from sexually transmitted diseases. Condom use is strongly recommended.

The fact sheet is only guide. Read the FDA package insert that comes with your pills

Medical Benefits of Birth Control Pills

1. Regular menstrual Cycles.
2. Less blood loss with periods.
3. Less iron deficiency anemia.
4. Less pain and cramping with periods.
5. Reduced risk of ovarian and endometrial cancers.
6. Fewer functional ovarian cysts.
7. Fewer ectopic pregnancies.
8. Less benign breast disease (fibrocystic breasts or fibroadenomas)