

INFORMATION TO PATIENTS ON HOW TO TAKE THE BIRTH CONTROL PILL

1. **Read these directions**

- before you start taking your pills, and
- any time you are not sure what to do.

2. **Look at your pill pack** to see if it has 21 or 28 pills:

- **21-PILL PACK:** 21 active pills (with hormones) taken daily for three weeks, and then no pills taken for one week

or

- **28-PILL PACK:** 21 active pills (with hormones) taken daily for three weeks, and then seven "reminder" pills (no hormones) taken daily for one week.

Also check:

3. It is recommended that you use a second method of birth control (e.g. latex condoms and spermicidal foam or gel) for the first seven days of the first cycle of pill use. This will provide a back-up in case pills are forgotten while you are getting used to taking them.

4. **When receiving any medical treatment, be sure to tell your doctor that you are using birth control pills.**

5. **Many women have spotting or light bleeding, or may feel sick to their stomach during the first three months on the pill.** If you do feel sick, do not stop taking the pill. The problem will usually go away. If it does not go away, check with your doctor or clinic.

6. **Missing pills also can cause some spotting or light bleeding,** even if you make up the missed pills. You also could feel a little sick to your stomach on the days you take two pills to make up for missed pills.

7. **If you miss pills at any time, you could get pregnant. The greatest risks for pregnancy are:**

- when you start a pack late, or
- when you miss pills at the beginning or at the very end of the pack.

8. **Always be sure you have ready:**

- **Another kind of birth control** (such as latex condoms and spermicidal foam or gel) to use as a back-up in case you miss pills, and
- **An extra, full pack of pills.**

9. **If you experience vomiting or diarrhea, or if you take certain medicines,** such as antibiotics, you pills may not work as well. Use a back-up method, such as latex condoms and spermicidal foam or gel, until you can check with your doctor or clinic.
10. **If you forget more than one pill two months in a row,** talk to your doctor or clinic about how to make pill-taking easier or about using another method of birth control.
11. **If your questions are not answered here, call your doctor or clinic.**

WHEN TO START THE *FIRST* PACK OF PILLS

Be sure to read these instructions;

- before you start taking your pills, and
- any time you are not sure what to do.

Decide with your doctor or clinic what is the best day for you to start taking your first pack of pills. Your pills may be either a 21-day or a 28-day type.

A. 21-DAY COMBINATION

With this type of birth control pill, you are on pills for 21 days and off pills for seven days. You must not be off the pills for more than seven days in a row.

1. **The first day of your menstrual period (bleeding) is day 1 of your cycle.** Your doctor may advise you to start taking the pills on Day 1, on Day 5, or on the first Sunday after your period begins. If your period starts on Sunday, start that same day.
2. Take one pill at approximately the same time every day for 21 days. **then take no pills for seven days.** Start a new pack on the eighth day. You will probably have a period during the seven days off the pill. (This bleeding may be lighter and shorter than your usual period).

B. 28-DAY COMBINATION

With this type of birth control pill, you take 21 pills that contain hormones and seven pills that contain no hormones.

1. **The first day of your menstrual period (bleeding) is day 1 of your cycle.** Your doctor may advise you to start taking the pills on Day 1, on Day 5, or on the first Sunday after your period begins. If your period starts on Sunday, start that same day.
2. Take one pill at approximately the same time every day for 28 days. Begin a new pack the next day, **not missing any days.** Your period should occur during the last seven days of using that pill pack.

WHAT TO DO DURING THE MONTH

1. **Take a pill at approximately the same time every day until the pack is empty.**

- Try to associate taking your pill with some regular activity such as eating a meal or going to bed.
- Do not skip pills even if you have bleeding between monthly periods or feel sick to your stomach (nausea).
- Do not skip pills even if you do not have sex very often.

2. **When you finish a pack**

- **21 Pills**
Wait seven days to start the next pack. You will have your period during that week.
- **28 Pills**

Start the next pack **on the next day**. Take one pill every day. Do not wait any days between packs.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU MISS PILLS

The following outlines the actions you should take if you miss one or more of your birth control pills. Match the number of pills missed with the appropriate starting time for your type of pill pack.

SUNDAY START	OTHER THAN SUNDAY START
MISS ONE PILL Take it as soon as you remember, and take the next pill at the usual time. This means that you might take two pills in one day.	MISS ONE PILL Take it as soon as you remember, and take the next pill at the usual time. This means that you might take two pills in one day.

SUNDAY START	OTHER THAN SUNDAY START
<p>MISS TWO PILLS IN A ROW</p> <p>First two Weeks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take two pills the day you remember and two pills the next day. 2. Then take one pill a day until you finish the pack. 3. Use a back-up method of birth control if you have sex in the seven days after you miss the pills. <p>Third Week:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep taking one pill a day until Sunday. 2. On Sunday, safely discard the rest of the pack and start a new pack that day. 3. Use a back-up method of birth control if you have sex in the seven days after you miss the pills. 4. You may not have a period this month. <p>IF YOU MISS TWO PERIODS IN A ROW, CALL YOUR DOCTOR OR CLINIC.</p>	<p>MISS TWO PILLS IN A ROW</p> <p>First two Weeks:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Take two pills the day you remember and two pills the next day. 2. Then take one pill a day until you finish the pack. 3. Use a back-up method of birth control if you have sex in the seven days after you miss the pills. <p>Third Week:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safely dispose of the rest of the pill pack and start a new pack that same day. 2. Use a back-up method of birth control if you have sex in the seven days after you miss the pills. 3. You may not have a period this month. <p>IF YOU MISS TWO PERIODS IN A ROW, CALL YOUR DOCTOR OR CLINIC.</p>
<p>MISS THREE OR MORE PILLS IN A ROW</p> <p>Anytime in the Cycle:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Keep taking one pill a day until Sunday. 2. On Sunday, safely discard the rest of the pack and start a new pack that day. 3. Use a back-up method of birth control if you have sex in the seven days after you miss the pills. 4. You may not have a period this month. <p>IF YOU MISS TWO PERIODS IN A ROW, CALL YOUR DOCTOR OR CLINIC.</p>	<p>MISS THREE OR MORE PILLS IN A ROW</p> <p>Anytime in the Cycle:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Safely dispose of the rest of the pill pack and start a new pack that same day. 2. Use a back-up method of birth control if you have sex in the seven days after you miss the pills. 3. You may not have a period this month. <p>IF YOU MISS TWO PERIODS IN A ROW, CALL YOUR DOCTOR OR CLINIC.</p>

NOTE: 28-DAY PACK: If you forget any of the seven "reminder" pills (without hormones) in Week 4, just safely dispose of the pills you missed. Then keep taking one pill each day until the pack is empty. You do not need to use a back-up method.

Always be sure you have on hand:

- a back-up method of birth control (such as latex condoms and spermicidal foam or gel) in case you miss pills, and
- an extra, full pack of pills.

If you forget more than one pill two months in a row, talk to your doctor or clinic, about ways to make pill-taking easier or about using another method of birth control.