

Starting the Birth Control Pill

Today you have been prescribed an oral contraceptive for either birth control purposes or to treat other medical problems such as irregular bleeding, cramping, and so on. The pill should be started in the following manner.

- Start the pill the same day that your period starts, you will still be bleeding.
- Start the pill on the Sunday immediately following the start of your period.
- Take one pill per day. Try to take the pill at the same general time each day, either the morning or evening. It doesn't have to be the same hour, but it should be the same general time each day. When you finish one pack, start the next pack the following day.
- If you take the pill in the morning and become nauseous, switch to the evening. Always remember to take the pill with food. The nausea usually passes within the first week. If it doesn't, begin taking Vitamin B6, 100 mg once a day, with the pill. If that doesn't work, we can change your pill.
- If you are taking the pill to treat irregular or heavy bleeding and/or cramping, it will take more than one cycle to see improvement. Don't get discouraged, be patient.
- Don't miss a pill. If you do, you will not be guaranteed protection from ovulation, pregnancy, irregular bleeding and cramping.
- If you do miss a pill and you take it in the morning, take it anytime during the day that you realize you forgot to take it.
- If you miss it altogether, either take it as soon as you realize, then take your next pill at your normal time, or take two pills at your usual time the next day. Doubling the dose may make you a little nauseous. You may also have some temporary spotting for a few days until it takes effect. If you are sexually active, you should use condoms for the rest of your cycle, as you are not protected from pregnancy. (You must use condoms for the first three weeks of your first pack, until the medication becomes effective.)
- Some common side effects may include breakthrough bleeding (spotting), changes in appetite, weight loss or weight gain, mild swelling, breast tenderness, and mild headaches. These all generally pass after a few cycles. Don't stop taking the pills, again, just be patient. If they persist beyond 3 cycles or worsen, call us as we may need to alter your medication.
- Breakthrough bleeding/spotting is expected, and it happens to almost everyone to some extent. The bleeding can range in color from brown to red. It can be light or heavy, it can increase and it can last a few days or longer. You need to call us if you are soaking a pad and changing it every hour or if the bleeding lasts longer than 10-14 days. This should pass within the first 3 cycles.
- If you are sexually active, you should be using condoms in addition to the birth control pills. In this day and age, you need to take care of your health as sexually transmitted diseases like AIDS, hepatitis, syphilis, gonorrhea, Chlamydia, and HPV virus are on the rise.