



\*21 day pack

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# **COMBINED ORAL CONTRACEPTIVE PILL (The Pill)**

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# Combined oral contraceptive pill (The Pill)



\*28 day pack

## General information

- Currently, there are three types of oral contraceptive pills: combined oestrogen-progesterone, progesterone only and the non-hormonal pill. The most commonly prescribed pill is the combined hormonal pill with oestrogen and progesterone.
- Requires that you take 1 pill every day.
- May cause irregular bleeding during the first few months of use.
- Safe for a woman with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), even if she takes antiretroviral (ARV) medicines.
- There are many different brands and regimens of combined oral contraceptives.
- Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.

## Effectiveness

- 91% effective and 9 pregnancies per 100 women reported due to missed doses

## How the method works

- You take 1 pill every day. The pill is most effective when you take the pill at the same time every day.
- The pill contains small amounts of the hormones oestrogen and progestin.
- The progesterone is primarily responsible for preventing pregnancy. The main mechanism of action is the prevention of ovulation; they inhibit follicular development and prevent ovulation
- These hormones make the mucus around the cervix thick. This stops sperm from meeting an egg.
- They also prevent the release of eggs from the ovaries (ovulation).

## How to use

- Begin with the first pill in the packet as directed by your provider.
- Take 1 pill every day until you finish the packet.
- Take the pill at the same time every day. Do not miss any pills.
- Have a new packet of pills on hand before you finish your packet.
- If you get your pills from a pharmacy, you can use the instructions in this brochure.

## Do not use this method if you

- Are breastfeeding an infant less than 6 months old.
- Smoke cigarettes and are 35 years old or older.
- If you are at risk of heart disease, stroke, smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure, or high cholesterol.
- Have certain uncommon diseases of the heart or blood vessels.
- Have blood clots, deep vein thrombosis, or pulmonary embolism, or are on an anticoagulant therapy.
- Have lupus or severe liver disease or gall bladder disease, even if medically treated.
- Have breast cancer or a history of breast cancer.
- Have migraine aura.

## Important facts:

- You control the method.
- Can be stopped at any time without a provider's help.
- Does not interfere with sex.
- You have to remember to take a pill once a day, every day.
- Use condoms (male or female) if you are at risk of STIs.

## Seek medical help if you

- Have any questions or problems.
- Need more pills.
- Develop any health problems.
- Were late or missed a pill, had sex in the past 3 days, and want to avoid pregnancy. You can take emergency contraceptive pills (ECPs).
- Think you may be pregnant.

### Sources:

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