

Contact your doctor or health care provider with any of the following symptoms:

ACHES:

A – Abdominal Pain

C – Chest Pain

H – Headaches

E – Eye Problems

S – Severe Leg Pain

Where can you get pills?

Birth control pills require a prescription from a doctor or qualified health care provider. Call your local family planning clinic for information.

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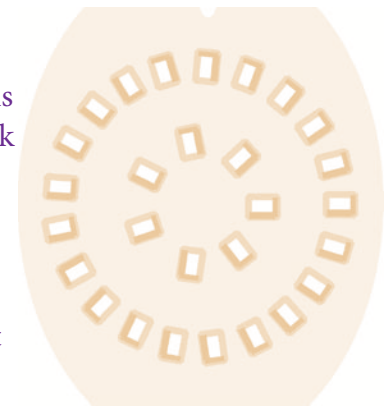
Birth Control Pills

How pills work:

Combination (estrogen and progestin) birth control pills work by stopping your body from releasing an egg, so that there is no egg to be fertilized. The hormones in these pills are similar to the hormones that are produced by a woman's body. Birth control pills also work by causing the cervical mucus (liquid at the opening of the uterus) to thicken, which can stop sperm from getting into the uterus.

How to use the pills:

Take one pill every day at about the same time every day. For instructions on how to begin taking your pills, ask your doctor or health care provider. If you miss any pills, you may be at risk for pregnancy. Ask your doctor or health care provider for specific instructions. You may also ask about Emergency Contraception (EC).



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Effectiveness:

About 3 women in 1,000 will get pregnant in one year (99.7% effectiveness) if they take their pills every day and at the same time every day (perfect use). If you miss any pills, or don't take them at the same time every day (typical use), your chance of pregnancy goes up. If you are taking some other medications, the pills can be less effective. Talk with your provider about drug interactions.

Benefits of the pill:

Most women report regular and lighter periods with fewer cramps and PMS symptoms, as well as a clearer complexion when taking some types of pills. Pills provide protection against ovarian cancer, endometrial cancer, benign breast disease, ovarian cysts and iron deficiency. Taking pills does not interrupt sex. If you want to get pregnant, you can become pregnant immediately after you stop taking the pill.

Potential side effects and disadvantages:

For some people, having to take a pill every day is a disadvantage. Most modern pills have a lower dose of hormones and cause fewer side effects, such as spotting between periods, mild nausea or breast tenderness. Side effects usually don't last long and go away with a change in pill type. Recent research has shown that women

who take pills do not typically gain any more weight than they would gain without taking pills. Ask your provider about side effects before you quit the pill. A change in pill prescription can help decrease side effects.

Tell your doctor or health care provider about any medications you are taking, including prescriptions, over-the-counter, herbal remedies and vitamins.

Using birth control pills will not give you protection against HIV (AIDS) or sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as chlamydia, herpes, genital warts (HPV), gonorrhea, hepatitis B and syphilis.

Potential risks:

Some women should not take pills if they have specific health conditions, including some types of diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Ask your doctor or health care provider about potential health risks.

Cigarette smoking increases the risk of serious cardiovascular side effects (blood clots, heart attacks, strokes), especially for women over 35. Women who use birth control pills are strongly advised not to smoke.

Risk to life and health is greater from pregnancy than from pill use. Most modern pills have a low dose of hormones and can be taken with little risk. Current research indicates that pill use is not associated with breast cancer.