

tampon or your underwear is considered a "period" when at all. A drop of blood or a brown smudge on your underwear is on the pill

If you do not have your "period" when expected while taking birth control pills, you may want to call your provider.

- If you have not missed any pills and you miss one period---pregnancy is unlikely. Many women taking the pill occasionally miss one period. You can start a new package of pills at the regularly scheduled time.
- If you forget one or more pills and miss a period, you should contact your provider so a pregnancy test can be done.
- If you miss two periods in a row, call your provider even if you took your pills everyday.

Pregnancy

If you do become pregnant while taking the birth control pills, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) has concluded that pills do not increase the risk for birth defects.

Also, ACOG had concluded that "There is no evidence that oral contraceptive use decreases subsequent fertility. After oral contraceptive use is stopped, there may be a short delay of 1-2 months in the reestablishment of menses and ovulation."

Vomiting/Diarrhea

If you vomit within 2 hours of taking the pill, or if you have severe vomiting and diarrhea, use a back-up method of birth control, such

as condoms, while you are ill and for at least 7 consecutive days of active pills after the diarrhea and/or vomiting stops.

Starting the pill:

You will be advised to start your pills in one of three possible methods:

1. Quick start - You will start your pills today. Unless you start your pills within 5 days of starting your period, use a back-up contraceptive method, such as condoms, for at least 7 days. Do not expect to get your period until you finish taking the active pills.
2. First day start - You will start your pills on the first day of your next period.
3. Sunday start - You will start your pills on the first Sunday after your period begins. If your period begins on a Sunday, you will start that day.

Try to **take your pills at the same time every day**. If you have spotting for 2 or more cycles, call your provider to see whether you need a different pill. Spotting is more likely to occur with the current low-dose birth control pills.

Questions? Call your Nurse Practitioner

BIRTH CONTROL PILL INSTRUCTIONS



This pamphlet is a summary of instructions you received from your health care provider

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What to do if you miss an active hormone pill or pills.

A pill is considered missed if more than 24 hours have gone by since you should have taken it.

Missed 1 pill anywhere in 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 is needed.

Missed 2 or more pills anywhere in pack

Take the last pill you missed now even if it means taking two pills in 1 day. Do not take 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)

It is normal to experience some spotting or even a light flow when you miss a pill. Should you have further questions, please contact your health care provider

Emergency Contraception (EC)

If you have had unprotected sex in the previous 7 days and you have missed two or more pills especially in the 1st week of the pack, you may need emergency contraception. Missed pills in the first week of the pack pose the greatest risk of pregnancy. EC is most effective if taken within 72 hours of the episode of unprotected sex but may be taken up to 5 days or 120 hours after the episode. Brady Health and the local health department have EC. EC (Plan B) is available at the Pharmacy without a prescription. Seek advice from your health care provider or pharmacist.

General Information:

The birth control pill is safe and effective. However, birth control pills do not protect you from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as chlamydia, gonorrhea or HIV . To reduce the risk of STIs, use a condom **every** time you have sexual intercourse. The

pill works primarily by stopping ovulation (release of an egg). Pills are very effective if taken at the same time every day (try not to vary by more than an hour). Some medications and supplements can decrease effectiveness, such as anticonvulsants (seizure medicine), some antibiotics and St. John's Wort.

Benefits:

In addition to preventing pregnancy, birth control pills decrease the risks of ovarian cancer, cancer of the lining of the uterus, benign breast masses, and ovarian cysts. Pills decrease menstrual blood loss and menstrual cramps. Pills also decrease your chance of having an ectopic pregnancy (a pregnancy outside of the uterus).

Side Effects:

Most side effects of the pill are not serious. The most common are nausea, vomiting, bleeding between periods, weight gain and breast tenderness. Most of these side effects resolve in the first three months of pill use.

Serious Events:

Serious side effects are rare but include: blood clots in the leg, lung, brain, or heart; rare liver tumors, high blood pressure; and gall bladder diseases. **Smoking increases the risk of the cardiovascular side effects.** If you smoke, have high blood pressure,

diabetes, high cholesterol, jaundice, if you have or have had cancer or liver tumors, taking the birth control pill can increase the risk of serious side effects.

Pill Warning Signals:

Any one of these symptoms may mean that you are in serious trouble. Note that the first letter of each symptom spell out the word "ACHES"

A - Abdominal pain (severe)

C - Chest pain (severe), shortness of breath

H - Headache (severe), dizziness, weakness, numbness, or difficulty speaking

E - Eye Problems (vision loss or blurring)

S - Severe leg pain (calf or thigh)

If any of these occur, call your provider right away or go to an emergency room.

Also call your provider if you develop depression, yellow jaundice or a breast lump.

If you smoke, stop smoking. We can assist you with our Smoking Cessation Program.

"Period" issues:

Women taking pills note that periods tend to be short and scanty, and you may see no fresh blood