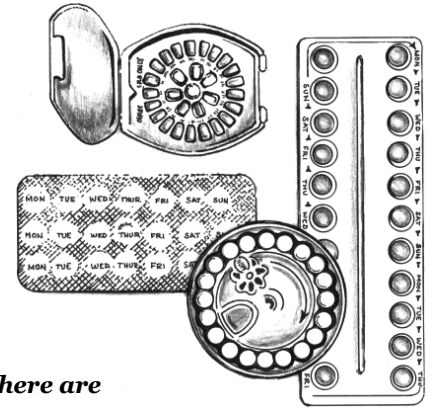


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# All About the Birth Control Pill

**The Birth Control Pill is a small pill you take every day to keep from getting pregnant.**

The pill has two hormones in it like the ones made in a woman's body. These hormones stop the woman's eggs from leaving her ovaries.



*There are many kinds of birth control pills.*

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## How does the Pill work?

Every day at about the same time, the woman takes one pill. That way her hormones stay at the right level to keep her from getting pregnant.

## How well does it work?

The pill is very good at keeping women from getting pregnant.

Only about 1 to 8 women out of 100 who use the pill for a year may get pregnant.

## How do I get the Pill?

You must first go to a health care provider. Talk to your provider about:

- Any health problems you may have.
- Any medicine you may be taking.
- Any questions you may have.

Your provider will help you decide if the pill is right for you. There are many kinds of pills. If one kind is not right for you, another might be.



*Take your birth control pill every day at about the same time.*

## What women like:

- It does not interrupt having sex.
- It does not cause any serious problems in most women.
- It can help protect women from cancer of the ovaries and other diseases.

## What some women don't like:

- You must remember to take a pill every day.
  - Women may be bothered by some side effects.
  - The pill does not protect you from HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) or any other diseases you can get from having sex.
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## How do I use the Birth Control Pill?

Start taking your pills the day your health care provider suggests.

- Take 1 pill every day until the whole pack is gone.
- Take your pill at about the same time each day. The pill works best when the hormones in your body stay at the right level.

### Tips:

- Take your pill at the same time you do something you do every day – like getting dressed.
- The very first time you use the pill as a method, use condoms along with it for 2 weeks. This gives you extra protection while your body gets used to the hormones in the pill.
- Call for a refill when you start your last pack of pills.

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## What if I miss a Pill?

If you miss taking any of your pills, you may get pregnant.

- Use another method (like condoms) to help make sure you don't get pregnant. Your health care provider can tell you how long you must use it.
- If you have had sex within the past week, ask your provider about using Emergency Contraceptive (EC) pills.

### If you miss taking 1 pill:

- Take it as soon as you remember.
- Take your next pill at the regular time.
- It's a good idea to use condoms for the next 7 days.

### If you miss taking 2 pills:

- Take two pills a day until you catch up.
- Ask your provider about using EC pills.
- Use condoms and keep using them until you start your new pack of pills.

### If you miss 3 or more pills in a row:

- Call your health care provider for advice. Ask about EC pills.
- Use condoms and keep using them for as long as your health care provider advises.

**The Birth Control Pill does not protect you from HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) or other diseases you can get from having sex.**

**Use a new condom every time you have sex to help protect yourself from these diseases.**

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## What about the side effects of the Pill?

Some women may have:

- Changes in their periods, or spotting and bleeding between periods
- Nausea
- Tender breasts
- Mood changes

If any of these bother you, talk to your health care provider.

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## The Pill may not be safe for some women.

Talk to your provider about any health concerns you may have. For example:

- If you smoke and are over 35 years old.
- If you have had blood clots, stroke, or a heart attack.
- If you have high blood pressure or diabetes.
- If you have ever had breast cancer.

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## Watch for these warning signs.

**Call your health care provider right away** if you have any of these:

- Sudden headaches
- Blurry vision
- Sharp, sudden pain in your leg, chest, or abdomen

These are signs of serious health problems that a few women may have while using the pill.