

Birth Control Pills: 5 Things You Need to Know

How well the pill works to prevent pregnancy depends on whether you take it correctly. Go over this list with your healthcare provider to make sure you know how to use your birth control pills.

1 What type of pill you are taking, and how it changes your period

There are two main types of birth control pills:

- **Combination pills** that deliver the hormones progestin and estrogen
- **Progestin-only pills**

Both pills may make you have more or fewer periods over time. With **extended-cycle combination pills**, you may have significantly fewer periods. Know your cycle and if you think you might be pregnant, get a test.

My birth control pill _____

Type of pill: Combination Progestin-only

My period should come every _____ days



One way to remember to take your pill at the same time each day is to set an alert in your smart phone or watch. Or, you can mark it on a calendar when you take it each day.

2 How to take your birth control pill correctly

Go over these general rules with your healthcare provider. Some will be specific to the type of pills you take.

- **Use a back-up birth control method at first.** (It may take several weeks for your pill to start working.)

Start the pill this day: _____

Use back-up method until this day: _____

- **Take your pill at about the same time every day.**
- **Know what to do if you accidentally miss a day.**
- **Tell your healthcare provider about any medicines or supplements you take.** Some can keep your birth control pills from working well.

3 What side effects you may have

You may not have any side effects but it helps to know the most common ones. (Many common side effects ease or go away after the first few weeks or months.) Side effects you may have are:

- Bleeding or spotting between periods
- Headaches
- Nausea
- Sore breasts

4 How to stop taking your pill

You can stop taking your pill at any time. Here's what you can expect:

- If you stop in the middle of a cycle, you'll probably have bleeding within 4 to 6 days.
- You'll be able to get pregnant immediately. Use another birth control method if you don't want to become pregnant.

5 When to call your healthcare provider



Call your healthcare provider if you know or suspect that you are pregnant or if you notice any of these symptoms:

- Chest pain, jaw pain, or severe stomach pain
- Headaches that are:
 - Different from normal
 - Very severe and sudden
 - Come after bright, flashing lights in your vision
- New lump in your breast
- No period (if you had a monthly period before)
- Soreness in your leg
- Trouble breathing
- Yellowing eyes or skin



Questions for my healthcare provider

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