

## All About the Birth Control Pill (“The Pill”)

Clinic Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ 24 Hour emergency phone # \_\_\_\_\_

### What is the birth control pill?

The Birth Control Pill is a small pill you take every day. The pill has two kinds of hormones like the ones made in a woman’s body. There are many kinds of birth control pills to choose from. If one is not right for you, another one might be.

### How does the pill work?

The pill works mostly by keeping the woman’s eggs from leaving her ovaries.

### How well does the pill 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 get pregnant.

### How do I use the pill?

- Start taking your pills on the day your clinician suggests.
- Take one pill every day until the whole pack is gone.
- Take a pill at about the same time every day, that way the level of hormones stays the same in your body.
- Take them at the same time you do something you do every day, like brushing your teeth.
- During the first 2 weeks you start taking the pill, use another method, like condoms, every time you have sex. This will help protect you while your body gets used to the hormones and while you get used to taking the pill.

**Call for a refill and be sure to schedule your annual exam when you start your last pack of pills.**

### What if I miss a pill?

If you miss taking any of your pills, you run the chance of getting pregnant.

- Use another method, like condoms; to be sure you don’t get pregnant.

If you miss taking 1 pill:

- Take it as soon as you remember it, even if it is when its time to take your next pill.
- Take the next pill at the regular time.

If you miss taking 2 or more pills:

- Use condoms
- Call your clinic right away for advice.
- **Ask about emergency contraception.**

### What if I want to stop the pill?

- The best way is to stop when you finish a pill pack. Don’t start a new pack.
- If you do not wish to become pregnant, start a new method right away.

### What about the side effects of the pill?

Some side effects of the pill **may be:**

- Changes in your period, or spotting and bleeding between periods
- Nausea
- Breast tenderness
- Mood and weight changes
- Changes in sex drive

If any of these side effects bother you, talk to your clinician.

### Some women should **not** use the pill.

- If you are over 35 and smoke.
- If you have had blood clots or stroke.
- If you have been *diagnosed* with migraine headaches
- If you have high blood pressure.
- If you have hepatitis or other liver problems.

### What are some other things I should know about the pill?

- It does not cause any serious problems in most women.
- It may protect women against cancer of the ovaries and uterus.
- Some medications can make the pill less effective (including St. John’s Wort)
- Some medications you take regularly may be less effective while you are taking the pill.
- Be sure to tell your clinician about any medications (including vitamins & herbs) you take.

#### Watch for these warning signs.

Call your clinic right away if you have:

- **Abdominal Pain**
- **Chest pain**
- **Headaches**
- **Eye Problems**
- **Severe leg pain**

The birth control pill does not protect you from HIV (the AIDS virus) and other diseases you could get from having sex. Use condoms along with the pill to protect yourself from these diseases.