



Your Guide to Birth Control: Combination Pills

Combination pills are used to prevent pregnancy. Most people call them “the pill”. You have to take a pill every day to prevent pregnancy.

How the Pill Works:

Combination pills release a regular dose of 2 hormones, estrogen and progestin. They prevent pregnancy by thickening the mucus in the cervix which prevents the sperm from travelling into the uterus. They also thin the lining of the uterus, which makes it difficult for a fertilized egg to attach to the uterus. Lastly, they stop the ovaries from releasing an egg each month (ovulation).

What to do During the Month:

Take 1 pill at the same time every day until the pack is empty. Set an alarm on your phone to help you remember. *It’s important not to skip pills even if you’re having spotting or bleeding or if you have nausea. Talk with your provider if these side effects are concerning you.

What to do if You Miss Pills:

*“Active” pills are the pills in the first three rows of your birth control.

*“Reminder” pills are the pills in the very last row.

- If you miss ONE “active” pill:
- Take the pill as soon as you remember. Take the next pill at your regular time (this might mean you’ll take 2 pills in one day).

* You don’t have to use a back-up method to prevent pregnancy.

- If you miss TWO “active” pills in a row:

- Take the 2 pills that you missed the day you remember. Take the next 2 pills the next day then continue taking 1 pill each day until your pack is gone.

*You could become pregnant if you have sex for 7 days after missing 2 pills, so use a backup

- If you miss THREE “active” pills in a row:

- Throw out that pack and start a new pack that day.

*You could become pregnant if you have sex for 7 days after missing 3 pills, so use a backup method (condom) for those 7 days.

>> If you forget any of the 7 “reminder” pills in the week four row, throw away the missed pills and keep taking one pill each day till the pack runs out, then start a new pack.

If you miss pills and get confused (CAUSE LET’S BE HONEST, THIS IS A LOT) just to be sure to use a back-up method (condoms) and you can email your provider about what to do.