



## Did you know?

The pill was developed more than 60 years ago and it's one of the most important options for treating menstrual and hormonal issues. It's considered one of the most important medicines ever developed because it offers a safe way for people to plan when to have children.



The pill helps with heavy and painful periods, lessens acne and is a treatment for other menstrual and hormonal issues. In fact, 82% of teens who are on the pill report that they use it for a reason other than birth control.<sup>1</sup>

1. "Beyond Birth Control: The Overlooked Benefits of Oral Contraceptive Pills," Rachel K. Jones of the Guttmacher Institute.



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## PEDIATRIC AND ADOLESCENT GYNECOLOGY

# The Pill

*The pill is a treatment for difficult periods. It can help with heavy, irregular or painful bleeding. It can also help with other period concerns.*

## Facts about the pill

- The pill includes the medicines estrogen and progestin.
- Estrogen and progestin thin the lining of the uterus and block ovulation. They also help prevent and treat acne.
- The pill is safe for most people to use.
- There are many different brands of the pill, and your doctor will recommend the best one for you.

## How do I get started on the pill?

- Start taking the pill as soon as you get it from the pharmacy.
- You can start the pill on any day of the week. The pack comes with a set of stickers so you can label each pill with the correct day.
- It's a good idea to set an alarm on your phone to remind you to take the pill at the same time every day.

## Active and placebo pills:

- There are two types of pills in most packs:



**Active pills** have hormones in them. It's very important not to miss any of these pills.



**Placebo pills** don't have any active medicine. You will have your period while taking the placebo pills.

- Most people start bleeding on the second or third day while taking the placebo pills, but bleeding can start any time. Be sure to start a new pack of pills after the last placebo pill, even if you are still having your period.

- For most people, periods are lighter and less painful when using the pill. This can happen right away or after several months.

## What are the possible side effects from the pill?

- Most people who take the pill have no side effects. Talk to your doctor if you have questions, are having trouble with the symptoms listed below or if they last longer than 2 weeks.
- You may have a mild upset stomach, mild headache or breast tenderness during the first week.
- The pill shouldn't cause weight gain or depression.
- The pill will not affect your chances of getting pregnant when you stop taking it.
- Using the pill lowers the risk of getting uterine and ovarian cancer.
- Some people experience unexpected or breakthrough bleeding while on the pill. This usually gets better after using it for several months. Make sure you take the pill at the same time every day.
- The pill can slightly increase the risk of blood clots (called venous thrombosis or deep venous thrombosis). **People with a history of blood clots or other risk factors shouldn't use the combined pill, patch or ring. People with these risk factors should use progestin-only treatments to help with periods or for contraception.**



## How can I get refills?

- Call your pharmacy 2 weeks before you need a refill, so you don't run out of medicine.
- You should be able to get a 3-month supply each time. If you can't get a 3-month supply at your pharmacy, ask if they offer a mail-order option, or call your insurance company for other options.
- Some insurance companies may require you to pay a co-pay when picking up your medicine. Contact your insurance company to see if you have to pay anything up front.
- Some insurance companies will give you a 12-month supply if you've been on the pill for at least 3 months.
- If you are having any problems getting or using the pill, call or message our office.

## What do I need to know when using the pill as birth control?

- It takes 7 days for the pill to be effective in preventing pregnancy. Be sure to use a second method of birth control, such as condoms, during that time.
- It's important to take the pill the same time every day and not miss any doses.
- The pill does not prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Use condoms and get tested at least once a year.

### Learn more



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