



FACT SHEET: PROGESTIN-ONLY BIRTH CONTROL PILLS

A pill containing progestin taken every day at the same time. AKA “POPs” or the “mini pill.”

How effective are progestin-only pills?

POPs are 93% effective when taken regularly. Nothing except abstinence is 100%. Keep in mind that POPs do not prevent any sexually transmitted infections – they are only for birth control. *To help with birth control and significantly decrease your risk of STIs, use a condom.*

How do I take it?

Take one tablet (swallow) a day at the same time every day.

Who should NOT take POPs? Those who have:

Pregnancy (current)	Breast cancer	Allergic to any part of the pill
Undiagnosed abnormal genital bleeding	Taking certain medications for seizures or tuberculosis, HIV	Liver disease or tumors

What are the possible side effects of progestin-only pills?

Serious side effects (uncommon in healthy women): ectopic pregnancy, ovarian cysts, breast cancer, and liver tumors. It is not likely to increase the risk of blood clots or high blood pressure. ***Smoking increases the risk of serious cardiovascular events.***

Moderate or minor side effects, including nausea, vomiting, mild headache, bleeding irregularity, and breast tenderness. You usually will not have a regular period, and it may stop your period.

Less common side effects: cramping, weight change, breast tenderness, acne, abdominal pain, anxiety, depression, change in sex drive, bloating, blotchy darkening of the skin, high cholesterol, and triglycerides, or problems tolerating contact lenses.

How to start taking the pill?

You have two choices of when to start your pills:

Quick Start: Take the first pill in the pack as soon as you get the pills if you are reasonably sure that you are not pregnant. Take a pregnancy test in 1 month to confirm.

Next Period Start: Take the first pill in the pack on the first day of your next period, or soon after.

For progestin-only pills containing norethindrone or norgestrel, you are protected from pregnancy right away if you start your first pack within 5 days after the first day of your regular period. If it is more than 5 days after, you should use condoms as back up for the first 2 days. When you are done with that pack, just continue with one pill every day.

For progestin-only pills containing drospirenone, if you start the first pack on the first day of your period, no additional contraceptive protection is needed. If you start more than 1 day after your period starts, either abstain from sexual intercourse or use condoms for the next 7 days.

What should I do if I miss a pill?

Missing any pills, taking them off schedule, or vomiting a dose when you are ill may decrease the effectiveness of the pill. Consider using a backup method (condom and spermicide) if you do.

If you miss one, take it when you realize you missed it. If it is more than 3 hours late, use a backup method.

If you miss two, take two pills when you realize, and two the next day, then one pill a day after that. Use a backup method for the next 2 days and consider using an emergency contraception pill if you have had vaginal intercourse without a condom.

Discuss with your medical provider if you frequently miss more pills for more tips on taking medication regularly or consider changing to a long-acting contraceptive method that does not rely on taking a pill every day.

Are birth control pills considered to be medication?

Yes. Inform your other health care providers that you are taking the pill. Other medications and herbs can change its effectiveness or vice versa, and birth control pills can affect bleeding during surgery.

Can I take POPs if I am breastfeeding?

Yes. You can start your pills after delivery, even if you are breastfeeding.

For more information, please ask your medical provider or pharmacist and read the package insert for your birth control.