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PROGESTIN ONLY PILLS (Minipill)

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General information

- The minipill comes in a pack of 28. Unlike combination birth control pills, there's no row of inactive, or placebo pills.
- Requires that you take 1 pill every day.
- Safe for women who are breastfeeding.
- You may begin the minipill after giving birth.
- When you first start the minipill, take it within 5 days of when your period starts. It takes time for the minipill to work. Use a **condom** every time you have sex in the first week after you start the minipill.
- May cause irregular monthly bleeding. For breastfeeding women, causes delayed return of monthly bleeding.
- Safe for a woman living with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)/acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS) even if she takes antiretroviral (ARV) medicines.
- Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV.

Effectiveness

- 90-97% effective and 3-10 pregnancies are reported per 100 women due to missed doses.
- 99% effective in breastfeeding women in the first year and 1 pregnancy per 100 women reported.

How the method works

- You take 1 pill every day. The minipill is most effective when you take the pill at the same time every day.
- The minipill has small amounts of progestin. Progestin makes the mucus around the cervix thick. This stops sperm from meeting an egg.
- This hormone also prevents the release of eggs from the ovaries (ovulation).



How to use

- Begin with the first pill in the packet as directed by your provider.
- Take 1 pill every day until you finish the packet.
- Take the pill at the same time every day. Do not miss any pills.
- Have a new packet of pills on hand before you finish your packet.
- If you get your pills from a pharmacy, you can use the instructions in this brochure.

Do not use this method if you

- Have prolonged headaches
- Experience bleeding

Important facts

- Can be stopped at any time without a provider's help.
- You control the method.
- Does not interfere with sex.
- Can cause irregular monthly bleeding.
- You have to remember to take a pill once a day, every day.
- All of the pills have the hormone progestin in them; there are no placebos or sugar pills.
- Use condoms (male or female) if you are at risk of STIs, including HIV.

Seek medical help if you

- Have any questions or problems.
- Need more pills.
- Develop any health problems.
- Were late or missed a pill, had sex in the past 5 days, and want to avoid pregnancy. You can take emergency contraceptive pills (ECPs).
- Think you may be pregnant.



Sources:

- Population Council. The Balanced Counseling Strategy Plus (3rd ed.) [Internet] 2015 [cited 2021 April 06]. Available from: https://www.popcouncil.org/uploads/pdfs/2015RH_BCS-Plus_CounselingCards_en.pdf.
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- National Health Mission. Reference Manual for Oral Contraceptive Pills. [Internet] 2016 Mar [cited 2021 April 06]