

What are Progestin Only Birth Control Pills?

Progestin only birth control pills (sometimes called the “mini pill” or POPs) are oral pills taken daily that contain 1 hormone (progestin). They prevent pregnancy by thickening the cervical fluid to keep sperm from reaching an egg, but also may stop the release an egg (ovulation) in some users.

How effective are Progestin-Only Birth Control Pills?

Progestin only pills are a very effective method of birth control. The progestin-only pill is about 93% effective at preventing pregnancy in typical use, which means that around 7 out of 100 people who use it as their only form of birth control will get pregnant in one year. With consistent and correct use as described in this fact sheet, it can be over 99% effective.

How can I get Progestin-Only Birth Control Pills?

You can visit a clinic to get progestin only pills or a prescription for them and talk with a healthcare provider about whether they are right for you.

Advantages of Progestin Only Pills	Disadvantages of Progestin Only Pills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lighter or no periods (which is safe) • Improved menstrual symptoms for some users (such as cramps) • May possibly treat and decrease pain associated with endometriosis • Does not affect your ability to get pregnant in the future - once stopped your fertility quickly returns • Easy to stop using and if you have side effects they go away very quickly • Hormone related side effects are less likely when compared to most other methods • A good choice for people who cannot use estrogen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must remember to take a pill at the same time every day • No protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) • Irregular bleeding is common, including spotting and sometimes prolonged bleeding

When do I start my pills and when are they effective?

It is recommended you start your pill right away. The pill is effective in preventing pregnancy within 48 hours of starting your first pack, so you need to use a backup method of birth control such as condoms, or not have sex for the first 2 days. You do not have to wait for your period to start, but if you happen to start within the first 5 days of your period you don't need to use a backup method as the pill is considered effective immediately.

How do I take the Progestin Only Birth Control Pills?

- With progestin-only pills it is essential to take them at the same time every day. You can set an alarm or even use a reminder app.
- If you take the progestin-only pill more than 3 hours late, there may be a risk of pregnancy.
- When you take the last pill in the package, start a new package the next day. Do not take any breaks or days off between packs.

What if I miss pills or take them late?

Took your pill more than 3 hours late or missed a pill?

- Take one pill as soon as you remember, continue taking one pill daily at the same time each day.
- Use back-up such as condoms, or do not have sex for 48 hours.
- Consider using emergency contraception if you had sex without a condom in the last 5-7 days. For information on emergency contraception, please see our website at: www.optionsforsexualhealth.org.

Late or missed pills can result in spotting. Excessive vomiting or diarrhea may affect your birth control pill. Check in with health care provider or call Sex Sense at 1-800-739-7367.

Seek medical attention immediately if you have any of the following symptoms, as they could indicate a serious complication:

- Signs of pregnancy
- Heavy bleeding
- Depression
- Severe, lower abdominal pain (may be a sign of pregnancy)

Some medications and over-the counter herbal supplements may interact with or decrease the effectiveness of birth control. Be sure to mention that you are using birth control to your health care provider or pharmacist.

Questions? We're here for you!

We know it can be confusing to choose and use a method. We are here to help. You can visit one of our Options for Sexual Health Clinics to speak with a health care provider. Our Sex Sense Team is available Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. by phone 1-800-739-7367 or by email at SexSense.org to answer your questions about birth control, or any other questions about sex, sexuality, or sexual health. This fact sheet contains general information and should not be used in place of individual consultation with a qualified healthcare provider.