

Birth Control Method

Progestin-Only Birth Control Pills

What Is It?

Progestin-only birth control pills contain the hormone progestin. They do not contain estrogen.

How Does It Work?

The progestin-only pill thickens cervical mucus, which makes it harder for sperm to reach the egg, and thins the lining of the uterus. The progestin-only pill also stops the ovaries from releasing an egg each month, but it does not do so consistently. There are no placebo pills.

How Do I Use It?

You take a progestin-only pill at the same time each day for 28 days. If a pill is missed by more than 3 hours, take another pill as soon as possible and use a back-up birth control method (condom), for the next 2 days. If vomiting or severe diarrhea occurs within 3 hours of taking a pill, use a back-up method for 2 days.

Benefits

- They do not interfere with sex.
- They can be taken if you have certain health conditions that prevent you from taking combined hormonal pills, such as a history of deep vein thrombosis (DVT) or high blood pressure.
- If you wish to get pregnant, simply stop taking the pills.
- They can be started immediately after a pregnancy and while breastfeeding.
- They may reduce menstrual bleeding or stop bleeding completely.

Risks

- They should not be used by women with certain types of breast cancer or a history of breast cancer. They are not recommended for woman with certain medical conditions, such as some liver disease and certain forms of lupus.
- Unintended pregnancy can occur if you do not take the pill at the same time each day.

Possible Side Effects

- Irregular bleeding, including short cycles, spotting, heavy bleeding, or no bleeding at all
- Headaches
- Breast tenderness
- Nausea

Effectiveness of progestin-only pills compared to other methods	Highly Effective
	Less Effective
Protects against STI's, including HIV?	No.
Effective right away?	Yes, if you start taking the pills within 5 days of the start of your menstrual period. If you start taking the pills at any other time, avoid sexual intercourse or use a back-up method (condom), for the next 2 days.
OK with breastfeeding?	Yes

