

# Birth Control Method

## Combined Hormonal Birth Control Pills

### What Is It?

Combined hormonal birth control pills contain the hormones estrogen and progestin.

### How Does It Work?

The hormones in combined hormonal birth control pills stop the ovaries from releasing an egg each month. They also thicken the cervical mucus, which makes it harder for sperm to reach the egg, and thin the lining of the uterus.

### How Do I Use It?

Typically, you will take a hormone-containing pill at the same time each day for a certain number of days, followed by a period of taking hormone-free pills or no pills at all. During these days of hormone-free pills or no pills, you will have your period. There also is a pill that you take each day for a year. With this pill, menstrual bleeding may become lighter over time or even stop.

## Benefits

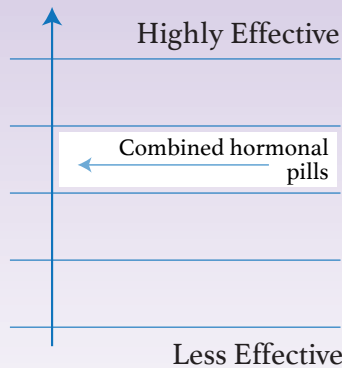
- They do not interfere with sex.
- They can be used to manage certain conditions that cause heavy bleeding & menstrual pain, such as fibroids and endometriosis.
- They may make your period more regular, lighter & shorter
- They may reduce cramps, improve acne, reduce menstrual migraine frequency, and reduce unwanted hair growth.

## Risks

Combined pills are safe for most women. They are linked to a small increase in the risk of blood clots (deep vein thrombosis [DVT]), heart attack & stroke. Combined pills are not recommended if you:

- smoke and are older than 35
- have high blood pressure or a history of stroke, heart attack or DVT
- have a history of migraine headaches with aura
- have certain severe liver problems
- have certain medical conditions, such as some forms of lupus
- have had certain types of weight loss surgery
- have breast cancer or a history of breast cancer

Effectiveness of combined hormonal pills compared to other methods

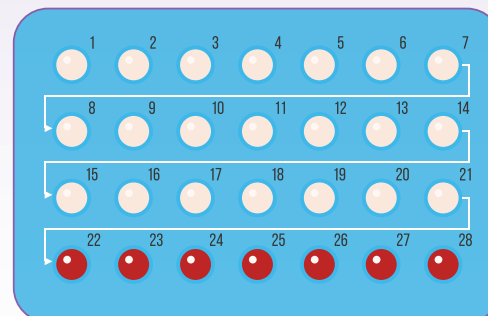


Protects against STI's, including HIV?	No.
Effective right away?	Yes, if you start taking the pills within 5 days of the start of your menstrual period. If you start taking the pills at any other time, avoid sexual intercourse or use a back-up method (condom), for the next 7 days.
OK with breastfeeding?	Yes, after breastfeeding is established (usually 4 to 6 weeks after childbirth)

## Possible Side Effects

- Breakthrough bleeding
- Headaches
- Breast tenderness
- Nausea

Most side effects are minor & often go away after a few months of use.



Your pack may have 4 or 7 sugar pills, or potentially may have no pills at all.