

# Instructions for Birth Control Pill Use

Birth control pills provide no protection from the transmission of AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases (STD). If you are unsure of your partner's sexual or drug using behaviors, we strongly recommend the use of condoms every time that you have sexual intercourse.

## HOW BIRTH CONTROL PILLS WORK

Birth control pills used by the Shawnee County Health Agency are a combined estrogen and progesterone female hormone pill. The pill works by maintaining an even level in your blood of these two hormones and this keeps your ovaries from releasing eggs (prevents ovulation). That is why it is very important for you to take your pill at the same time daily. There are many different dosage levels of birth control pills. We try to maintain you at the lowest possible level. Pills are highly effective when taken on schedule and a backup birth control method used when needed. DO NOT STOP taking your pills unless instructed to do so by the clinic or a physician.

## HOW TO START & TAKE BIRTH CONTROL PILLS

One of the very first things you need to consider is the time of day you plan to take your pill. It is best to associate it with something you do at the same time daily (mealtime, bedtime, etc.). Take your pill within a 2 hour time span daily. (Example: If you take your pill at 8:00 am you have from 7:00 am to 9:00 am to take your pill). If you forget to take your pill, take it as soon as you remember it. (See **WHAT TO DO IF YOU MISS PILLS** section)

Once you start taking pills there is a pill to take every day. When you finish a package, begin another package of pills the next day.

Be sure you have another kind of birth control ready at all times to use as a backup in case you miss pills.

For additional information regarding pill usage, please refer to the pill package insert.



**Shawnee County Health Agency**  
1615 SW 8th Avenue

**There are several ways to start Birth Control pills. Your way will be explained by clinic staff.**

### Sunday Start

1. Take the first active pill of the first pack on the Sunday after your period starts, even if you are bleeding. If you period begins on Sunday, start the pack that same day.
2. Use another method of birth control as a backup for the first cycle.

### Day One Start

1. Take the first active pill of the first package during the first 24-hours of your period.
2. You will not need to use a backup method of Birth Control, since you are starting your pills at the beginning of your period.

### HEALTH BENEFITS FROM BIRTH CONTROL PILLS

In addition to preventing pregnancy Birth Control pills may provide other benefits, such as:

- lighter periods, flowing fewer days, less cramping.
- anemia due to iron deficiency less likely to occur.
- noncancerous cysts or breast lumps may occur less frequently.
- may provide some protection against ovarian and uterine cancer.

### SIDE EFFECTS

Many women taking birth control pills experience very few or no side effects. Some women may have nausea, weight gain, breast tenderness or water retention. These problems may disappear after taking the first few packs of pills; however if side effects persist or worsen, another dosage level of pills may be needed so please contact the clinic. For more information regarding the side effects and risks with birth control pills, please read the information enclosure you receive in your pill package.

#### 1. Spotting or Breakthrough Bleeding

This is bleeding (even very light bleeding) when you should not be. You should have a period sometime during the seven days you take reminder pills. If you bleed any other time, it is important to remember a.) it is not a menstrual period, b.) IT IS ADVISABLE TO USE ANOTHER METHOD OF BIRTH CONTROL WITH YOUR PILLS UNTIL THE BLEEDING STOPS, c.) this bleeding should stop in 3-4 months. If it continues please contact the clinic.

#### 2. Missing A Period

If you have taken your pills correctly and miss a period, do not stop taking your pills. A missed period when pills are taken correctly (started on time and none missed) rarely means pregnancy. If you missed pills or have taken them incorrectly and miss a period, call the clinic for instructions as soon as possible.

### 3. Smoking & Birth Control Pills

Cigarette smoking increases the risk of serious cardiovascular side effects from oral contraceptive use. This risk increases with age and heavy smoking (15 or more cigarettes per day). Women who use oral contraceptives are strongly advised not to smoke.

### 4. Early Pill Danger Signs

All pill users should know the “**A.C.H.E.S.**” of the pills. These are the signs that will alert you to the possibility of blood clots, liver tumors, gallbladder disease or high blood pressure - they require immediate attention:

- A - ABDOMINAL PAIN** - This pain is in the upper right part of the abdomen and may include nausea and vomiting.
- C - CHEST PAIN** - Sharp pain in the chest; difficult and rapid breathing; coughing up blood, crushing chest pain.
- H - HEADACHES** - Sudden severe headache, waking up with headaches. May be accompanied by blurred vision, dizziness, weakness or numbness of an arm or leg.
- E - EYE TROUBLE** - Sudden partial or complete loss of vision, flashing lights on side of eyes, double or blurred vision.
- S - SEVERE LEG PAIN** - Localized pain, warmth and swelling, red streaks in the calf.

If you have any of these symptoms **DO NOT WAIT**; call the clinic immediately at (785) 368-2116. If the clinic is not open, contact the emergency room.

### WHAT TO DO IF YOU MISS PILLS

1. (one missed pill) - take it as soon as you remember. Take your next pill at the regular time. Probably, you won't become pregnant, but you might want to use a back up method for 7-days after the missed pill.
2. If you **MISS 2** “active” pills in a row in **WEEK 1 OR WEEK 2** of your pack:
  - Take 2 pills on the day you remember and 2 pills the next day.
  - Then take 1 pill a day until you finish the pack.
3. If you **MISS 2** “active” pills in a row in the **3rd WEEK**:

#### If you are a Sunday Starter -

Keep taking 1 pill every day until Sunday. On Sunday, **THROW OUT** the rest of the pack and start a new pack of pills that same day.

#### If you are a Day 1 Starter -

**THROW OUT** the rest of the pill pack and start a new pack that same day.

You may not have your period this month but this is expected. However, if you miss you period 2 months in a row, call your doctor or clinic because you might be pregnant.

You **MAY BECOME PREGNANT** if you have sex in the 7 days after you miss pills. You **MUST** use another birth control method (such as condoms, foam, or sponge) as a backup method for those 7 days.

4. If you **MISS 3 OR MORE** “active” pills in a row (during the first 3 weeks):

#### If you are a Sunday Starter

Keep taking 1 pill every day until Sunday. On Sunday, **THROW OUT** the rest of the pack and start a new pack of pills that same day.

#### If you are a Day 1 Starter

**THROW OUT** the rest of the pill pack and start a new pack that same day.

You may not have your period this month but this is expected. However, if you miss you period 2 months in a row, call your doctor or clinic because you might be pregnant.

You **MAY BECOME PREGNANT** if you have sex in the 7 days after you miss pills. You **MUST** use another birth control method (such as condoms, foam, or sponge) as a backup method for those 7 days.

5. If you forget any of the 7 “reminder” pills in Week 4:  
**THROW AWAY** the pills you missed. Keep taking 1 pill each day until the pack is empty. You do not need a backup method of birth control.

### OTHER TIMES BACKUP BIRTH CONTROL WILL BE NEEDED

1. If you have vomiting and/or diarrhea - use a backup for the remainder of the pill package.
2. If you are on antibiotics, Rifampin, Dilantin (phenytoin) or carbamazepine, and griseofulvan, use a backup method while on these medications.

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**REORDER ROUTINE**

The number to call for ordering is 368-2116. You will be asked:

- A.** Your name, address, birth date and phone number.
- B.** If your periods are normal and if you are having any problems with your pills.
- C.** The amount of supplies you want to pick up.

You will be advised when your supplies will be ready.

**We encourage you to call in your order when you open your last pack of pills.**

Please **DO NOT STOP** your pills due to financial reasons. Contact the clinic to see what arrangements can be made.

### CLINIC TIMES

#### Monday, Thursday, Friday

8:00 am - 12:00 pm

1:00 pm - 4:30 pm

#### Tuesday

10:00 am - 2:00 pm

3:00 pm - 6:30 pm

#### Wednesday

8:00 am - 12:00 pm

2:00 pm - 4:30 pm