

Combination Birth Control Pills - FAQ

How does the birth control pill work?

- prevents ovulation
- thickens cervical mucus, which makes it hard for sperm to enter the uterus
- thins the lining of the uterus, making harder for a fertilized egg can attach to it

How effective are birth control pills in preventing pregnancy?

- with typical use 9 in 100 women (9%) will become pregnant in the first year
- with perfect use 1 in 100 women will become pregnant during the first year
- the pill must be taken **every day** to prevent pregnancy
- missed pills are a common cause of pregnancy

How do I start combination pills?

- start taking the pill on the first day you get them (**even if you have your period**)
- use condoms for the next 7 days – it takes a week for the pill to become effective

How do I take 28-day combination pills?

- take one pill each day for 28 days – **even if you are bleeding, start your new pack on time. DO NOT MISS ANY PILLS ANY DAY FOR ANY REASON.**
- The 4th week of pills don't contain hormones, you will have your period this week

What do I do if I miss ONE pill?

- take the missed pill as soon as you remember
- take the next pill at your usual time (this may mean taking 2 pills in one day)
- continue your regular pill schedule (you are still protected from pregnancy)

What do I do if I miss TWO pills in a row in the FIRST or SECOND week of pack?

- take 2 pills on the day that you remember, and two pills the next day
- then continue taking 1 pill a day
- use condoms or don't have sex for 7 days so you don't get pregnant
- take emergency contraception if you had intercourse within the past week

What do I do if I missed TWO pills in a row in the THIRD week of the pack? OR

What do I do if I missed 3 or more pills in a row at any time during the pack?

- continue current pack, then skip the placebo week and begin taking a new pack
- use condoms or don't have sex until you have taken 7 days of active pills
- you may not have a period this month
- take emergency contraception if you had intercourse within the past week

Do other medications change the effectiveness of the combination pill?

- only two antibiotics (rifampin and griseofulvin) interfere with the pill
- some seizure medications some drugs used to treat HIV

What are the advantages of combined pill use?

Advantages of the pill fall in many categories:

Menstrual advantages: decreased bleeding (less anemia), eliminates ovulation pain, regulates periods and provides progesterone for women with PCOS/irregular periods

Sexual advantages: decreased risk of pregnancy makes sexual experience more pleasurable, the pill allows more spontaneity than other methods of contraception

Cancer advantages: decreases risk of ovarian and endometrial cancer for 30 years

What are the side effects of combined pill use?

Possible side effects of the pill include:

- nausea, breast tenderness, bloating, and mood changes
- if you get these symptoms, they should improve or resolve within 2-3 months

Is breakthrough bleeding or spotting normal?

- Yes! this should resolve after being on the pill for 3 months
- if it does not, or bleeding is excessive (soaking more than 1 pad/hour), talk to your prescriber
- forgetting a pill and smoking can also cause breakthrough bleeding

What are the risks of combination pill use?

- there is a slightly elevated risk high blood pressure, heart attacks, strokes, and blood clots

Comparative Risk of Blood Clots in BC Pill and Non Pill Users per year

Pregnant Women	BC Pill Users	Non BC Pill Users
6-20/1000	4-10/1000	2-5/1000

- women taking the pill should immediately go to the Emergency Room or notify their healthcare provider if they experience signs of a blood clot: shortness of breath and/or **ACHES**
 - Abdominal pain
 - Chest pain,
 - severe Headaches
 - Eye problems
 - Severe leg pain

Who should not take the pill?

- heavy smokers
- women over 35 who smoke any amount of cigarettes
- women with a history of blood clots, history of certain cancers, liver disease or migraine with aura

Progestin-only Birth Control Pills - FAQ

How do birth control pills work?

- prevents ovulation
- thickens cervical mucus, which makes it hard for sperm to enter the uterus
- thins the lining of the uterus, making harder for a fertilized egg can attach to it

What are the different types of birth control pills?

There are two basic types of birth control pills: 1) combination pills, which contain the hormones estrogen and progestin, and 2) progestin-only pills.

How effective are birth control pills in preventing pregnancy?

- with typical use 9 in 100 women (9%) will become pregnant in the first year
- with perfect use 1 in 100 women will become pregnant during the first year
- the pill must be taken every day at the same time to prevent pregnancy
- missed and late pills are a common cause of pregnancy

How do I start progestin-only pills?

- start taking the pill on the first day you get them
- use condoms for the next 2 days – it takes 48 hours for the pill to become effective
- start each new pack of pills on the same day of the week as the first pack

How do I take progestin-only pills?

- take one pill each day for 28 days – all the pills are active (no placebo pills)
- **take progestin-only pills at the same time each day**
 - **within 3 hours of the time the day before AND at least 2 hours before intercourse.**

What do I do if I am more than 3 hours late taking my pill or miss one?

- take another pill as soon as possible and
- use condoms or don't have sex for the next 2 days so you don't get pregnant
- take emergency contraception if you have had intercourse in past week

What do I do if I vomit or have severe diarrhea within three hours of taking a POP?

- this may decrease contraceptive effectiveness
- continue taking POPs daily at the same time each day and use back-up contraception (condoms) or avoid sex until two days after vomiting or diarrhea has resolved

What are the benefits of progestin-only pills?

The progestin-only pill may be a better choice for women who have certain health problems, such as blood clots, and cannot take pills with estrogen. Progestin-only pills usually can be used soon after childbirth by women who are breastfeeding.

Who should not take progestin-only pills?

Progestin-only pills may not be a good choice for women who have certain medical conditions, such as liver tumors or lupus. Women who have breast cancer should not take progestin-only pills.

What side effects are associated with taking progestin-only birth control pills?

- unscheduled bleeding and spotting are the most common bleeding patterns during POP use
- more frequent periods, longer episodes and shorter, less predictable bleeding
- half of users have a mostly regular monthly period
- a few women experience no period
- If you experience very heavy bleeding, or bleeding that lasts more than 8 days, contact your provider.

NuvaRing - FAQ

How does NuvaRing work?

- prevents ovulation
- thickens cervical mucus, which makes it hard for sperm to enter the uterus
- thins the lining of the uterus, making harder for a fertilized egg can attach to it

How effective is NuvaRing in preventing pregnancy?

- with typical use 9 in 100 women (9%) will become pregnant in the first year
- with perfect use 1 in 100 women will become pregnant during the first year
- the NuvaRing must be used as directed to prevent pregnancy
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How do I start NuvaRing?

- Put the NuvaRing in on the first day you get it
- use condoms for the next 7 days – it takes a week for the NuvaRing to become effective

How do I use NuvaRing?

- Insert NuvaRing into the vagina. Keep in place for 3 weeks.
- Remove the NuvaRing 3 weeks after insertion on the same day of the week it was inserted.
- during the days the NuvaRing is out, you will have bleeding.
- Reinsert 4-7 days later, **even if you are still bleeding**. Repeat every month.
- You are protected against pregnancy during the 4-7 days the NuvaRing is out, as long as you had it in for 3 weeks before removing.

What do I do if the NuvaRing falls out?

Rinse the NuvaRing in warm water and reinsert. If the NuvaRing has been out for more than 3 hours, you may not be protected against pregnancy. Use condoms until the NuvaRing has been back in place for 7 days.

What if I am late putting in my new NuvaRing?

- if you are 2 or more days late inserting your NuvaRing, get emergency contraception if you have had intercourse within the past week
- use condoms for one week after inserting new NuvaRing

Can other medications change the effectiveness of the NuvaRing?

- only two antibiotics (rifampin and griseofulvin) interfere with NuvaRing
- some seizure medications
- some drugs used to treat human immunodeficiencyvirus (HIV).

What are the advantages of NuvaRing use?

Advantages of the NuvaRing fall in many categories:

Menstrual advantages: decreased bleeding (less anemia), eliminates ovulation pain, regulates periods/ provides progesterone for women with PCOS/irregular periods

Sexual advantages: decreased risk of pregnancy makes sexual experience more pleasurable, NuvaRing allows more spontaneity than other methods of contraception

Cancer advantages: decreases risk of ovarian and endometrial cancer for 30 years

What are the side effects of NuvaRing use?

Possible side effects of the NuvaRing include: nausea, breast tenderness, bloating, increased discharge and mood changes, which typically improve within two to three months without treatment.

Is breakthrough bleeding or spotting normal?

- Yes! this should resolve after using the NuvaRing for 3 months
- if it does not, or bleeding is excessive (soaking more than 1 pad/hour), talk to your prescriber
- smoking can also cause breakthrough bleeding

What are the risks of NuvaRing use?

NuvaRing is considered a reliable and safe option for most healthy, non-smoking women. There is a slightly elevated risk of complications such as high blood pressure, heart attacks, strokes, and blood clots in the legs and lungs. Comparative Risk of Blood Clots in BC Pill and Non Pill Users per year (Pill has same medicine as NuvaRing)

Pregnant Women	BC Pill Users	Non BC Pill Users
6-20/1000	4-10/1000	2-5/1000

- Women using NuvaRing should immediately go to the Emergency Room or notify their healthcare provider if they experience signs of a blood clot: shortness of breath or **ACHES**
 - Abdominal pain
 - Chest pain,
 - severe Headaches
 - Eye problems
 - Severe leg pain

Who should not use NuvaRing?

- heavy smokers
- women over 35 who smoke any amount of cigarettes
- women with a history of blood clots, history of certain cancers, liver disease or migraine with aura