

## ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES

### Your birth control pill is:

1. Start taking the pill the first day of your period. Take one pill every day for 28 days. Swallow the pill with a glass of water.
2. For the first week you are taking your pill, you should use a backup method of birth control to allow the pill time to reach a protective level in your system.
3. Because each pill provides protection for 24 hours, you should try to take them at the same time every day.
4. Your period should start approximately when you are on your last 7 pills. You may notice that your periods are lighter and shorter. This is normal.
5. If you should forget a pill, take it as soon as you remember, then take your pill for that day at your usual time. This may mean taking 2 pills at once.
6. If you miss two pills in a row, you could become pregnant. Take 2 pills today (one in a.m., one in p.m.) and 2 pills tomorrow to catch up. You may spot and should use a back-up method for the rest of the month, such as condoms and foam. Finish the rest of the pack as usual. If you miss your period, call the office.
7. A missed period rarely means pregnancy when the pills have been taken as directed. Continue taking your pills according to schedule.
8. If you become ill and are vomiting and/or having diarrhea, use a backup method until 48 hours after your illness is over. Continue to take your pills.
9. Antibiotics decrease the effectiveness of birth control pills. You should use a backup method of birth control while on antibiotics and for 1 week after you finish them.

### Side Effects:

It takes 2 to 3 months for your body to become used to the hormones in the pills. For this reason, you may experience some side effects such as temporary weight gain, breast tenderness and occasional bleeding while you are on the pill. If you experience bleeding, please mark on the calendar the days that you bleed enough to wear a pad and also the days that you spot. As long as you continue taking your pills as directed, you will not get pregnant. After 2 to 3 months on the pill, bring your calendar to the office with you so that the hormones in your pills can be adjusted. Any side effect that lasts more than 2 to 3 months should be reported.

### Danger signs to report immediately:

Abdominal pain (severe)  
Chest pain (severe), cough, short of breath  
Headaches (not relieved by Tylenol), dizzy, weak, numbness  
Eye problems (vision loss or blurring, speech problems)  
Sever leg pains (calf or thigh)

10. If you desire to become pregnant and stop taking the pill, you should use another means of contraception (foam or condom) until you have had a normal menstrual period. You may not have a normal period for 2 to 3 months.