

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PILL USERS

(General instructions - individual brands may vary. Follow their instructions.)

1. Pills provide no protection against HIV or STDs. You must use condoms if either partner is at risk for these infections.
2. You need to use a second protection (such as foam or condoms) with your first pack of pills. The pill may not fully protect you from pregnancy the first month.
3. On your first cycle, if your period begins on a Monday through Saturday, take your first pill on the following Sunday. If your period begins on a Sunday, take your first pill on that same Sunday your period began. Take all 28 pills before starting a new pack of pills.
4. Swallow one pill at the same time each day until you take every pill in the package. Do not skip any days between packs.
5. Try to associate taking your pill with something else you do at the same time every day, like brushing your teeth. Remember, pills work best if taken at the same time every day. **Even if only several hours late, efficacy is decreased. Back-up contraception should be used for 7 days or abstain from sex for 7 days.**
6. If you forget to take a pill on time but are less than 12 hours late, take the forgotten pill as soon as you remember and take your next pill on time, even if it means taking 2 pills on one day.
7. If you forget two pills, take one pill in the morning and one pill in the evening for two days, then you will be on schedule. You need to use a second protection for the remainder of the pack of pills.
8. If you forget three or more pills, throw away the missed pills and continue with the same pack of pills as before, using a second protection for the remainder of the pack of pills.
9. Mild side effects may occur for up to four cycles of pills. You may experience mild nausea; if this occurs take pills with food. You may have spotting or bleeding between periods. This is called breakthrough bleeding.
10. If you have bleeding between periods (breakthrough bleeding), it is particularly important to try to take your pills at the same time every day. Marijuana or caffeine may cause bleeding between periods. Limit caffeine intake to two drinks per day. If you have spotting or bleeding between periods for several cycles, you may want to call your practitioner. When having bleeding between periods, use second protection.
11. Periods tend to be very short and light while on pills. You may see only a drop of blood or a brown smudge on your underwear. This can be normal. If you have not missed any pills and you miss a period, you probably don't need to worry. It is very unlikely that you are pregnant.
12. If you suddenly begin to have spotting or bleeding between periods (breakthrough bleeding) and have not previously had this problem, consider having your practitioner check for an infection.
13. Learn the pill danger signs. They spell the word ACHES:
 - A Abdominal pain
 - C Chest pain
 - H Headaches
 - E Eye problems like blurred vision
 - S Severe leg pain
14. Some medication such as antibiotics, seizure medicine and antacids may make birth control pills less effective. Use a second protection (foam & condoms) along with your birth control pills while taking the other medication. When using any other type of medication, ask your doctor or pharmacist if it will make birth control pills less effective.
15. When starting the last package of pills, please call for your next appointment for more supplies. You must have yearly paps to get more pills. Any time you have questions regarding birth control pills or symptoms of vaginal infections, call the Student Health Center.