FACT SHEET: PROGESTIN-ONLY PILL

Remember, progestin-only pills **do not protect you from Sexually Transmitted Infections or HIV.** If you are looking for protection from STIs and HIV, both the internal and external condoms are great options!



HOW DOES THE PROGESTIN-ONLY PILL WORK?

- The progestin-only pill contains a hormone like one your body makes. It works by making the mucus in your cervix too thick for sperm to pass through. If sperm cannot reach the egg, you cannot get pregnant.
- The progestin-only pill that contains the hormone Drospirenone also stops your ovaries from releasing eggs.
- No method of birth control is 100% effective. The progestin-only pill is 93% effective with typical use.

WHERE CAN I GET THE PROGESTIN-ONLY PILL?

- Your clinician can send a prescription to the pharmacy.
- You can buy it online or over the counter at many stores. Currently, Opill and a generic called norgestrel are the only options on sale over the counter. If you cannot afford to buy progestin-only pills over the counter, visit OpillCAP.com to see if you qualify for free pill packs.

HOW DO I START THE PROGESTIN-ONLY PILL?

- There are 2 ways to start the pill:
  - **Quick Start:** Take your first pill as soon as you get the pack.
  - **Next period:** Take your first pill soon after your next period begins.
- If you take your first pill *up to 5 days after the start of your period*, you are protected against pregnancy **right away**.
- If you take your first pill *more than 5 days after the start of your period*, you should **use condoms or spermicide as back-up for the first 2 days**.

HOW DO I USE THE PROGESTIN-ONLY PILL?

- **Once you start using the pill**, take 1 pill each day. Take your pill at the same time each day.
- After you finish a pack of pills, you should start a new pack the next day. You should have NO day without a pill.

WHAT IF I MISS PILLS?

- Norethindrone
  - **I forgot ONE pill:** Take your pill as soon as you can. If you take your pill more than 3 hours late, use condoms or spermicide for the next 2 days. **Consider using emergency contraception (EC) if you have unprotected vaginal sex.**
- Drospirenone
  - **I forgot ONE pill:** Take your pill as soon as you can.
  - **I forgot TWO pills or more:** Take your pill as soon as you can. Take your next pill at the usual time. **Use a back-up birth control method for 7 days. Consider using emergency contraception (EC) if you have unprotected sex.**
- You can read the packaging to find out which progestin-only pills you have (norethindrone or drospirenone).

WHAT DO PEOPLE LIKE ABOUT THE PROGESTIN-ONLY PILL?

- The progestin-only pill is safe and effective birth control. The progestin-only pill is safe for you to use while breast/chestfeeding.
- The progestin-only pill is a great option for people who prefer to avoid estrogen-containing methods.
- The progestin-only pill has no effect on your ability to get pregnant in the future after you stop taking it.

HOW WILL THE PROGESTIN-ONLY PILL AFFECT ME?

- You may notice changes in your periods. You may have spotting or no period at all. This is normal.
- You may have nausea, spotting, weight change, and/or breast/chest pain. These problems often go away after 2-3 months.

IS THE PROGESTIN-ONLY PILL SAFE?

- The progestin-only pill is very safe.

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