



Pill Warning Signs Serious Side Effects

If you develop these symptoms,
Call Your Health Center or
Go to the Nearest Emergency
Room Immediately

- Sharp or crushing chest pain or coughing blood
- Unusual swelling or pain in the legs
- Yellowing of the skin or eyes
- Pain in the abdomen, chest or arms
- Shortness of breath
- Sudden severe headache
- Severe depression
- Eye problems, such as blurred or double vision
- Unusual heavy vaginal bleeding
- Changes in frequency, severity or associated symptoms of your headache

If you develop these symptoms,
Schedule an Appointment
at Your Health Center

- New breast lump
- No period after having a period every month

HEALTH CENTER LOCATIONS

- AKRON • (330) 535-2671
- BEDFORD • (440) 232-8381
- CANTON • (330) 456-7191
- CLEVELAND • (216) 851-1880
- CORTLAND • (330) 399-5104
- GALION • (419) 468-8926
- KENT • (330) 678-8011
- LORAIN • (440) 242-2087
- MANSFIELD • (419) 525-3075
- MEDINA • (330) 723-1300
- RAVENNA • (330) 296-7526
- ROCKY RIVER • (440) 331-8744
- OLON • (440) 349-5998
- WOOSTER • (330) 345-7798
- YOUNGSTOWN • (330) 788-2487

1.800.230.PLAN
www.PPNEO.org



Planned Parenthood[®]
of Northeast Ohio

Your Health. Your Future.

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Pill Pointers

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When should I start taking my pills?

There are three options for you to start your pills:

- Start today.
- Start the first day of your period.
- Start the first Sunday after your period starts.

Starting your pills today may result in normal spotting during this month, but you will be protected from pregnancy quickly - in just seven days. If you are unsure about when to start your pills, ask your clinician.

How many pills do I have to take until I'm safe from pregnancy?

You will be protected from getting pregnant after you have taken your pills for seven consecutive days. We recommend that you use a second birth control method, such as condoms, during the first week you are on birth control pills. If you take your pills correctly, you will be protected every day of your cycle, including the seven days you are not taking the hormone pills.

How do I take my birth control pills?

Begin by taking the first 21 hormone pills - one a day by mouth. Then take the seven "reminder pills" the same way. They are a different color than the hormone pills. Your period should begin sometime during the week you take the reminder pills, and it may last anywhere from a few hours to seven days. Be sure to take all seven reminder pills, regardless of when your period starts or how long it lasts. After you finish taking all pills in the pack, begin a new pack of pills the next day.

What time should I take my pill?

It doesn't matter what time of day, as long as you take your pills at the same time every day. To help you remember to take your pill, try taking it with a regularly scheduled activity, such as going to bed, eating a meal, or watching the evening news. To avoid nausea/vomiting, never take your pill on an empty stomach.

What if I forget to take a pill?

If you miss one "active" pill (the first 21 pills), take it as soon as you remember. Then take the next pill at your regular time. This may mean you will take two pills in one day. Do not take them at the same time or you may experience nausea and vomiting. You do not need to use a back-up method of birth control if you have sex.

If you miss two "active" pills, double up by taking two pills each day for two days in a row.

If you miss three or more "active" pills in a row, stop using your current pack of pills. Throw out the old pack and immediately begin a new pack of pills. Use this new pack of pills from start to finish. Please note that you may not have your period this cycle. This is to be expected and is not harmful to your health.

If you miss two or more pills in a row and have sex within seven days of missing your pills, be sure that you use a back-up method of birth control, such as condoms, to prevent pregnancy. If you do not use a back-up method of birth control, you may become pregnant.

What if I have bleeding or spotting between my periods?

Breakthrough bleeding, or spotting, is very common during the first few months you take birth control pills. It can also occur when you don't take your pill at the same time everyday. The bleeding may be like a normal period or it may be light, brown discharge. If you experience this, do not stop taking your pills. Continue taking them, as directed. If the bleeding continues beyond the first two or three months even though you are taking your pills correctly, or if it becomes heavier than a normal period, call your health center.

Refer to the FDA label packaged with your pills, or call your health center for more information.



What if I miss a period?

As long as you take your pills correctly and consistently, your chances of becoming pregnant are very slim. There is no need to worry or stop your pills.

However, if you skip any pills during the month and then miss a period, you should call your health center to discuss getting a pregnancy test.

If you have taken your pills correctly and consistently, but miss two periods in a row, call to schedule an appointment, but do not stop taking your pills. Remember that your periods may be much lighter when you are taking birth control pills and may only last a few hours.

If you have any concerns about a missed period, call your health center before making a decision about discontinuing your pills.

Can I take other medications while taking birth control pills?

Generally, yes. However, some drugs may decrease the effectiveness of birth control pills. If you are prescribed another medication, ask your doctor, pharmacist or clinician if it will interfere with your birth control pill.

What is the best way to discontinue taking birth control pills?

Finish a whole pack of pills before you stop. If you do not start another pack, you will not be protected from getting pregnant when you have sex. Your first period may begin on-time or it may be several weeks late.

If you stop taking birth control pills because you want to become pregnant, it is wise to use condoms or spermicide for one month after going off the pill before trying to conceive. You should also begin taking folic acid supplements. For your children to be their healthiest, the Ohio Department of Health recommends spacing your children at least two years apart.