



## ORAL BIRTH CONTROL PILLS

### Background.

Birth control pills or “The Pill” is a contraceptive pill that contains estrogen and progestin. The active hormonal pills are similar to those naturally produced in the body. The low doses prevent the release of eggs from the ovaries, reduces the build-up uterine lining, and thickens the cervical mucous. Together these mechanisms prevent pregnancy. When used exactly as directed the Pill is 99% effective.

The Pill is also beneficial in managing acne, severe cramping and bleeding associated with menstruation, polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS). It also has a protective effect in preventing uterine and ovarian cancer.

### Starting “The Pill”.

The Pill has to be taken at the same time everyday! (Set the alarm on your phone to help you get into this habit. Each pack includes 21-24 days of “active hormone” pills and 4-7 days of a “inactive, sugar or placebo” pill. **You should expect to have your period or spotting during the inactive pill week.** (If you do not have even a smudge of brown discharge during this week schedule an appointment for a pregnancy test.)

Start the Pill during the week of your period, unless otherwise instructed. Back-up contraception (abstinence or condoms) is required for the first 7 days in using The Pill.

### Missing a Pill.

Missing a pill is a common problem even with the best intentions. If this happens too often, the Pill is probably NOT a good form of contraception for you. Here is what to do if you miss a pill.

|                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ONE MISSED PILL                   | Take your pill as soon as you remember, take the next pill at your regular time. <b>You are still covered for contraception.</b>                                                                                             |
| TWO MISSED PILLS                  | <b>You are <i>not</i> covered for contraception.</b> Take two pills as soon as you remember; take two pills (again) the next day. Use back-up contraception for 7 days.                                                      |
| MISSED START DAY OF NEW PILL PACK | <b>You are not covered for contraception.</b> Restart pills within first week of regular schedule. Use back-up contraception for 7 days.<br>If you had intercourse during the placebo week, call doctor’s office for advice. |

### Frequently Asked Questions.



Q: *What should I do if I have continuous spotting when I don't expect it?*

A: It is common to have irregular bleeding during the first 3 months of taking new birth control pills. If you have irregular bleeding for more than 3 months or if symptoms are associated with PAIN OR FOUL ODOR, schedule an appointment.

Q: *What if I don't have a period during the inactive pill week?*

A: A pregnancy test should be done. Call the doctor's office for advice.

Q: *Is there a risk of infertility from using the birth control pills?*

A: No. It may take a few months for your natural cycle with ovulation to resume. Most women are able to conceive within a year of stopping birth control pills. This is the same for women who do not take birth control pills.

Q: Do birth control pills cause breast cancer?

A: No. But women who have had breast cancer are encouraged to consider other forms of contraception.

### **Common Temporary Discomforts.**

Some women experience minor discomforts during the first 1-3 months of using birth control pills *and usually resolve*. These include nausea, breakthrough bleeding, breast enlargement or tenderness, slight weight change, mood changes, changes in sex drive.

Acne can also worsen during the first 3 months, but acne usually improves in the long run. There are many formulas for birth control pills. If you don't like your current birth control pill after 3 cycles, then schedule an appointment for a consultation to change your contraception.

### **ADVERSE RISK and DANGER SIGNS.**

**Birth control pills slightly increase the risk of developing blood clots. However, this risk is much less than the risk of developing a blood clot during pregnancy. If you have a blood clotting disorder, migraine headache with aura, high blood pressure, heart disease, hepatitis, lupus or smoke cigarettes, it is NOT advisable to take conjugated birth control pills (estrogen/progestin).**

### **GET IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION IF YOU EXPERIENCE THESE SYMPTOMS WHILE TAKING BIRTH CONTROL PILLS.**

Abdominal pain (severe)

Chest pain (severe)/shortness of breath/coughing up blood

Headaches (new, severe)/dizziness/numbness or weakness

Eye problems/sudden change in vision

Severe leg pain/warmth/redness

*Office of Dr. Louis Klein, MD, 112 La Casa Via, Suite 130, Walnut Creek, CA 94598*

*(925) 937-0995*