

Combined birth control pills

Combined birth control pills have 2 hormones (estrogen/progestin) that prevent pregnancy by stopping the release of an egg. The pill also causes the lining of the uterus to thin and the cervical mucus (liquid at the uterine opening) to thicken, which stops sperm from reaching the egg.

Effectiveness

- Less than 1 out of 100 people will get pregnant each year if they always use the pill the right way.
- About 9 out of 100 people will get pregnant each year if they don't always take the pill each day as directed.

Advantages

- Pills are easy to use and work very well if they are used the right way.
- Your periods may be more regular, lighter, and less painful while using the pill.
- Using the pill can lower the risk of some cancers.
- Using the pill can help clear up acne.
- You can start using the pill at any time, as long as you are not pregnant.

Disadvantages

- Some people may find it hard to remember to take the pill every day.
- The pill doesn't protect against STIs/HIV.

People who are 18 or older may get combined birth control pills at a participating pharmacy. Long-acting reversible contraceptives, such as IUDs or the implant, are 99% effective at preventing pregnancy. These birth control methods can prevent pregnancy for up to 10 years. Talk to your provider or pharmacist to decide if one of these methods may be right for you. Routine medical care and health screenings are important for early detection and prevention of health issues.

Combined birth control pills must be taken every day.

Pill packs have 21 active pills. Most pill packs also include 7 inactive pills (also known as placebo or sugar pills) to help remind you to continue taking 1 pill every day, even during your period.

You may not have any side effects from the pill.

However, you may have:

- Bleeding between your periods during the first 3 months of starting the pill.
- Nausea or feeling sick to your stomach.
- Headaches.
- Sore breasts.
- Mood changes like depression or irritability.

You should not use birth control pills if you are pregnant, or:

- Have breast cancer right now.
- Have ever had a heart attack, blood clot, or clotting problems.
- Have liver disease or liver tumors.
- Have migraine headaches with aura.
- Have high blood pressure.
- Smoke 15 or more cigarettes a day and are 35 year or older.
- Have ever had a complex organ transplant.