

Progestin-only pills (POPs)

Progestin-only pills (POPs) have 1 hormone called progestin that 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 take POPs each day as directed.
- About 9 out of 100 people will get pregnant each year if they don't always take POPs each day as directed.

Advantages

- Pills are easy to use and work very well if they are used to the right way.
- Your periods may be more regular, lighter, and less painful while taking POPs.
- POPs do not contain estrogen, so they can be used by people who can't take estrogen.
- You can start using POPs at any time, as long as you are not pregnant.
- POPs can be used right after childbirth, even if you are breastfeeding.

Disadvantages

- Some people may find it hard to remember to take the pill or to take it at the same time every day.
- POPs don't protect against STIs/HIV.

Progestin-only pills must be taken at the same time every day.

POPs come in 28-day packs with no hormone-free days. The thickening of cervical mucus happens within a couple of hours after you take a pill and will last for about 20 hours. A pill is considered "missed" if it has been more than 3 hours since you should have taken it.

You may not have any side effects from progestin-only pills.

However, you may experience:

- Irregular bleeding, spotting, heavy bleeding, or no bleeding at all.
- Headaches.
- Nausea.
- Sore breasts.
- Dizziness.

You should not use POPs if you are pregnant, or:

- You have breast cancer right now.

People who are 18 or older may receive their progestin-only 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.