

Starting Progestin-Only Pills (POP)

How do I take the POP pills?

If starting POP for the first time, you must use a back up birth control method, such as condoms, film, condoms & film or condoms & foam, for 7 days while taking the pills. Take one pill every day, at the same time or within 3 hours of that time. Take all the pills in the cycle pack until all your pills are gone and start the next pack the next day. DO NOT take any breaks or days off between packs. Always have your next pack ready BEFORE you finish each pack. Take your pill at the **same time each day**. It is easier to remember to take your pill when it is associated with a regular activity like eating a meal, brushing your teeth, or going to bed. Some women even set an alarm on their phones to keep them on track. Keep your pills in a cool, dry place away from heat. Each packet has a stamped expiration date, **do not** use the pills after that date.

If you miss 1 pill During the 3 hour window	Take the missed pill as soon as you remember. You MUST USE a backup birth control method such as condoms, or film for 2 days.
If you miss 2 pills in a row	Take the two pills on the day you remember and two pills the next day. Take one pill per day until the pack is finished. Use a backup birth control method such as condoms, foam, or film for seven days after the pills are missed. Get a pregnancy test if you have missed your menstrual cycle.
<u>Get a Pregnancy test if:</u> <u>Your menses is late, you have not taken all your pills on time & you used no backup protection, you missed 2 periods in a row or you are concerned about pregnancy for any reason</u>	You may need emergency contraception if you had Unprotected Intercourse (UPI) during your missed pills or you did not follow the instructions above. (Contact your provider ASAP)! <i>*Continue taking POP until you know results of Pregnancy test*</i>

What are some benefits of taking Progesterone only Pills (POP)?

- Can be used in women while breast feeding
- It contains only Progesterone and Can be used in women who cannot take estrogen containing contraceptive pills
- Improved menstrual symptoms for some women by decreasing period cramps & PMS symptoms
- May reduce incidence of painful crisis in sickle cell disease in women
- Easily reversible: fertility quickly returns to what it was previous to starting the POP once stopping the POP

What are the most common side effects?

- Changes in menstrual cycle which may include short cycles, irregular periods, intermenstrual bleeding and spotting, and less common, prolonged bleeding or amenorrhea.
- Headaches, weight gain or loss, Breast tenderness, ovarian cysts

Other less common side effects may include:

- Nausea
- Hirsutism (increase hair growth) & acne
- depression

Important things to know when taking Progestin Only Pills (POP)

- If you have vomiting or diarrhea, use a backup method of birth control (condoms, foam, or film) until 48 hours after the vomiting or diarrhea have ended.
- Use a backup method of birth control (condoms, foam, or film) when taking certain types of antibiotics (rifampin, griseofulvin) and be sure to tell your healthcare provider you are taking POP.
- Over the counter St. John's Wort may decrease the effectiveness of your birth control pill, meaning it may not work. Be sure to tell your healthcare provider if you take St. John's Wort.
- Progestin Only Pills may decrease your risk of certain types of uterine and ovarian cancer.
- There are many different types of birth control pills. Be sure to follow these instructions even if you know people following different ones. **Never** borrow pills from friends.
- Like all medications, birth control pills should always be kept out of reach of children.
- Our clinicians and public health nurses can be reached at **1-866-960-0633** for additional questions and concerns.