Birth Control: Progestin-Only Contraceptive Pills
(The Minipill)

Progestin-only contraceptive pills, also called the Minipill, are a form of daily birth control that contains the hormone progestin. This method does not contain estrogen. Progestin is much like a hormone made naturally in your body. The Minipill prevents pregnancy by changing the mucus at the cervix to help keep sperm from reaching an egg.

Advantages of the Minipill

- 91 percent effective against pregnancy with typical use
- Does not contain estrogen
- Safe to use right after giving birth and while breast-feeding

Disadvantages of the Minipill

- Irregular bleeding and spotting
- Possible side effects include: weight gain, nausea, breast tenderness, headache, acne, ovarian cysts, and change in mood.

How to use it

- It is important to take your pill at the same time every day at a time of your choosing.
- If a pill is missed by more than 3 hours, you should take a pill as soon as possible, even if that means taking 2 pills in the same day. Then, use a backup method of birth control, such as condoms, for the next 2 days. Emergency contraception (EC) should be considered if you have had unprotected or inadequately protected sex.
- Vomiting and severe diarrhea can keep the Minipill from working well. If this happens, use a backup method of contraception for the next 2 days.
Risks

**Ectopic pregnancy:** If you do get pregnant, there is an increased risk of the fertilized egg implanting outside of the uterus. This is very dangerous and is considered a medical emergency.

**Who cannot use it**

The Minipill should not be taken by women who:

- Have a history of breast cancer.
- Have lupus with certain antibodies.
- Have severe liver disease or liver tumors.
- Have had certain bariatric surgeries.
- Use certain seizure medicines or rifampin.

Tell your health care provider if you have any of these risk factors or conditions, or any other medical concerns.

**When to call the doctor**

Call the doctor or healthcare provider if you:

- Think you might be pregnant.
- Think you might have a sexually transmitted infection (STI).
- Miss a period or are late starting your period.
- Have new or worsening headaches.
- Have depression or change in mood.

**Preventing STIs**

The minipill does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Condoms are the best way for sexually active people to reduce the risk of infection. Always use a condom when you have sex. Get yearly health check-ups, including testing for STIs.