

What is the pill?

The pill contains synthetic hormones similar to the natural hormones produced by the female body, specifically estrogen and progesterone. The woman should take one pill orally each day, according to the instructions.

How does it work?

The pill essentially prevents ovulation. It also works at the cervical level by making the mucus less permeable to sperm and altering the lining of the uterus (endometrium) so that it becomes unable to receive a fertilized egg.

Is it effective?

Its efficiency is approximately 99.5%. However, when the conditions for use are not followed, this efficiency can decrease very rapidly (ex: forgotten).

How much does it cost?

A package of pills costs between \$15 and \$18. Various insurance plans reimburse all or part of that amount. For teens whose parents are covered by the Quebec Drug Plan, the pills are free until 18 years of age or until 25 years of age (inclusive) if they are going to school, they don't have a spouse and they are under the responsibility of their parents.

What is the procedure for starting the pill?

A consultation with a doctor or nurse is essential before starting to take the pill. An evaluation will confirm whether there are any contraindications.

When to start the pill?

It is now suggested to start the pill on the same day as the consultation with an additional method for the first 7 days of the first package. If it is started within the first 5 days of menstruation, protection against pregnancy is immediate. On the other hand, if it is started another day, it is necessary to use an additional method for 7 days, such as the condom.

How to take the pill?

- Take one pill per day, ideally at the same time;
- Packs of 21 pills: break of 7 days (no more);
- Packs of 28 pills: 1 tablet every day;

The pill will be effective at all times, even during the week off without hormones. However, all of the pills should be taken regularly and a new pack started on time.

Side effects?

Side effects are more common during the first 3 months of use and generally disappear after that. If they persist, your doctor can change the type of pill. The main side effects are:

Irregular periods (unexpected bleeding while you are taking the pill) mainly occur during the first 3 months. Unless you have forgotten to take a pill or experienced diarrhea or vomiting, the pill remains just as effective. If breakthrough bleeding persists, keep taking the pill and contact your doctor.

Nausea may be lessened by taking the pill in the evening or with food. If this doesn't work, contact your doctor. He or she may change the type of pill you take.

Breast tenderness and swelling. Often this is a temporary side effect. Wear a bra with good support and cut back on cigarettes, salt, chocolate, coffee, tea, and alcohol. If the problem persists, speak with your doctor.

What are the benefits?

The pill is a very effective and reversible method of contraception.

- It regularises the cycle
- It increases bone mass (bone strength)
- It reduces the frequency:
 - of acne
 - menstrual pain
 - of anemia (by reducing menstrual bleeding)
 - symptoms prior to menstruation (PMS)
 - ovarian cancer
 - cancer of the endometrium (lining of the uterus)
 - colorectal cancer
 - benign breast tumours
 - ovarian cysts
 - salpingitis (infection of the fallopian tubes)
 - ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy in the fallopian tubes)
 - symptoms of endometriosis

What to do in case you forget

Missed pills within 24 hours



Take one pill as soon as you remember and finish the package as usual

Missed pills longer than 24 hours or 2 pills one after the other



1st week:

Take 1 pill as soon as possible, throw out the missed pill(s) and finish the package as usual.
7 days protection (condom)

ATTENTION: If you had unprotected sexual relations within the previous 5 days, a morning after pill is necessary.

2nd and 3rd week:

Take 1 pill as soon as possible, throw out the missed pill(s) and continue until the end of the 3rd week, then begin a new package, without taking a hormone-free break.

Forgetting 3 pills and more in a row



1st week:

Take 1 pill as soon as possible, throw out the missed pill(s) and finish the package as usual.
7 days protection (condom)

2nd and 3rd week:

Take 1 pill as soon as possible, throw out the missed pill(s) and continue until the end of the 3rd week, then begin a new package, without taking a hormone-free break.

7 days protection (condom)

ATTENTION: If you had unprotected sexual relations within the previous 5 days, a morning after pill is necessary.

Complications

These are very rare but require a rapid consultation with a doctor. If you have: severe headaches, vision problems, leg pain, loss of consciousness, dizziness, paralysis or other abnormal symptoms, consult a doctor immediately. They occur mostly in women with health problems or those who smoke.

What to do?

I take the pill and antibiotics?

You must use a condom if the antibiotics lead to diarrhea and/or vomiting, which may decrease the effectiveness of the pill

I have vomiting?

If the vomiting occurs within 2 hours after taking a pill, take the one for the next day and continue your package, taking one pill per day. At the end of your cycle, you will be missing one active pill. You will then need to contract a birth control clinic, a CLSC, a doctor, pharmacist or info-health for advice on how to proceed.

I have diarrhea?

The presence of diarrhea can decrease the effectiveness of the pill. One day with diarrhea is like forgetting one pill, two days of diarrhea is like forgetting 2 pills, etc.

(See the recommendations for missed pills)

My pre-menopause?

Women in good health who don't smoke can use the pill until menopause.

I have surgery?

If you must undergo surgery that requires immobilization, tell your surgeon that you are taking the pill.

I smoke?

Why not take the opportunity to quit now? Tobacco smoking increases the risk of heart disease in women who take the pill. The risk increases with age and the pill cannot be prescribed for women over 35 who smoke more than 15 cigarettes per day.

THE MYTHS

Will I gain weight?

Weight usually remains unchanged. However, a balanced diet and regular physical exercise are always recommended, whether you take the pill or not.

What if I am not menstruating?

It can happen that at the end of the package of pills, you won't menstruate at the scheduled time. The risk of pregnancy is low if you took your pill diligently and without forgetting. It is best to do a pregnancy test anyway. You can contact your doctor if this happens the next month. You should know however that 2-3% of women who are on the pill don't menstruate and this is normal.

Should I take a rest for my body?

The body doesn't need to rest. If there are no contraindications during the medical evaluation, the pill can be taken for several years without stopping. You risk becoming pregnant if you

take a break for more than 7 days and you don't use another method of contraception.

If I have taken the pill for several years, could I be infertile?

Pregnancy becomes possible as soon as the pill is stopped. A time period of a few months may be necessary however before the cycle becomes regular again. The future fertility of the woman remains the same, regardless of the number of years she has used the pill.

I can't take the pill after giving birth?

The pill can be restarted three weeks after childbirth. The pill is not recommended for nursing mothers because it can cause a decrease in milk production. Your doctor may suggest other methods to you, such as the mini-pill.

Does the pill protect me against STIs and HIV (AIDS)?

The pill offers no protection against sexually transmitted and blood-borne diseases and what is more, its use is causing many people to abandon the condom. Your sexual health is important and condom use remains very important if you are at risk for STIs.

Site internet :

www.masexualité.ca

www.sexplique.org

www.icapote.com

www.planningchrr.com

The pill



Clinique de planning

CSSSR-N, 150 avenue Rouleau
Rimouski (Québec) G5L 5T1
Tél. : (418) 724-8578
www.planningchrr.com