

How to Use the Pill

Take one pill each day

If you miss 1 or 2 active pills in a row or start a pack 1 or 2 days late:

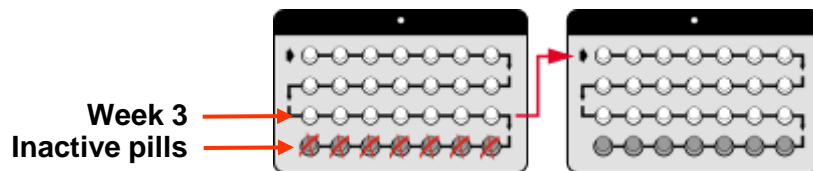
- Always take a pill as soon as you remember
- Continue to take one pill every day
- No need for additional protection

If you miss 3 or more active pills in a row or start a pack 3 or more days late:

- Take a pill as soon as possible, continue taking 1 pill each day, and use condoms or avoid sex for the next 7 days



- If you miss these pills in week 3, ALSO skip the inactive pills and start a new pack.*

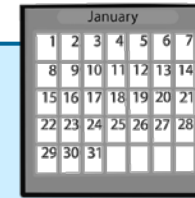


*With 21-pill packs, skip the pill-free interval and start a new pack

Remember:

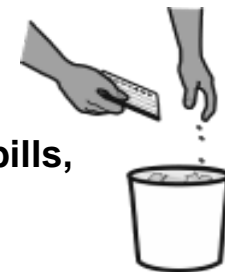
When you miss 3 or more active pills in a row, hormonal pills must be taken for 7 days in a row to get back to full protection.

If you miss three pills in a row during the first week of a pack and have unprotected sex, consider using emergency contraception.



If you miss any inactive pills (last 7 pills in 28-pill packs):

Throw away the missed pills and continue taking pills, 1 each day.



Instruct the client on how to use the Pill

- Tell the client to take 1 pill each day, preferably at the same time so that it is easy to remember. Taking pills with food may prevent nausea.
- Show which pill to take first and how to follow the arrows on the packet.
- Explain that the active pills are in weeks 1, 2, and 3. The pills for week 4 are inactive pills and do not contain hormones. Her period will occur during week 4.
- Remind her to obtain more pills before her supply is gone.

If you miss 1 or 2 active pills in a row or start a pack 1 or 2 days late:

- Always take a pill as soon as you remember, even if it means taking 2 pills the same day or at the same time.
- Continue to take 1 pill every day.
- There is no need for additional contraceptive protection.

If you miss 3 or more active pills in a row or start a pack 3 or more days late:

- Continue taking 1 pill each day and use condoms or avoid sex for the next 7 days.
- If you missed these pills in week 3, finish the active pills in the pack, skip the inactive pills, and start a new pack. You may have no menstrual bleeding that month.
- If you missed these pills in the first week of a new pack and had unprotected sex, consider using emergency contraception.

If you miss any inactive pills:

- Throw away the missed pills and continue taking pills, 1 each day.

When to start pills

A woman can start COCs on any day of the menstrual cycle if it is reasonably certain that she is not pregnant. Use the pregnancy checklist or a pregnancy test as necessary.

If menstrual bleeding started in the past 5 days:

- She can start now; no extra protection is needed.

If menstrual bleeding started more than 5 days ago or if she is amenorrheic (not having menstrual periods):

- Start pills now if reasonably certain she is not pregnant; no need to wait for the next menstrual period.
- She should avoid sex or use condoms for 7 days after taking the first pill.

Postpartum

- If she is breastfeeding, delay pills until the infant is 6 months old or until breastfeeding is discontinued.
- If she is not breastfeeding, delay pills 3 weeks.

Important:

- Prolonging the pill-free interval increases the risk of pregnancy.
- These missed pill instructions apply to pills containing 30–35 µg ethinyl estradiol. For pills with 20µg of estrogen or less, women missing one pill or starting a new pack one day late should follow the same guidance as missing one or two 30–35 µg pills. Women missing two or more pills in a row or starting a pack two or more days late should follow the same guidance as missing three or more 30–35 µg pills.