

INSTRUCTIONS ON USING THE PILL

When the directions for taking the pill are followed exactly, the pill is virtually 100% effective.

Some women may notice some discomfort similar to that of early pregnancy: mild nausea (morning sickness), breast tenderness, and weight gain. Occasional spotting or bleeding between periods may also occur. These complaints usually disappear after the pills have been used for a few months.

A woman takes the pill each day. There are 28 pills in each packet. The seven pills taken in the last week will allow the woman to have her period. It is important to not skip a day, as the cycle covers four weeks exactly. At the end of the packet, the woman throws the old packet away and starts a new packet.

If you forget to take your tablet, take it as early as possible next morning, followed by your usual tablet taken at the time of day you would normally take it. If you miss a tablet completely, it is advisable to use an additional method of contraception for the remainder of the cycle.

Studies in humans have not shown any relationship between the use of the pill and the development of cancer. According to the National Cancer Institute (USA):

- A number of studies suggest that current use of oral contraceptives (birth control pills) appears to slightly increase the risk of breast cancer, especially among younger women. However, the risk level goes back to normal 10 years or more after discontinuing oral contraceptive use.
- Women who use oral contraceptives have reduced risks of ovarian and endometrial cancer. This protective effect increases with the length of time oral contraceptives are used.
- Oral contraceptive use is associated with an increased risk of cervical cancer; however, this increased risk may be because sexually active women have a higher risk of becoming infected with human papillomavirus, which causes virtually all cervical cancers.
- Women who take oral contraceptives have an increased risk of benign liver tumors, but the relationship between oral contraceptive use and malignant liver tumors is less clear.

When pregnancy is desired, stop taking the pills. There will be a period during which your body will adjust to not having the pill in your system. You will be as fertile as you were before taking the pills, but not immediately after you stop using them.

Available evidence indicates that the pills have no effect at the time of the menopause.

Usually the pills are started four or six weeks after delivery of a baby.

The cost of pills is usually _____. They are free for the poor.