

Minipill Instructions

The minipill, also known as the progestin-only birth control pill, is an oral contraceptive that contains the hormone progestin. Unlike combination birth control pills, the minipill does not contain estrogen.

The minipill works by thickening cervical mucus, preventing sperm from reaching the egg. The minipill also thins the lining of the uterus, making it less likely for a fertilized egg to attach. It may suppress ovulation, though approximately 40% of minipill users will ovulate. For maximum effectiveness, you must take the minipill at the same time every day. Choose a consistent time to take your minipill each day.

Minipill users must have a back up method of birth control. Determine a backup method of birth control such as condoms, diaphragm, foam, or spermicidal suppositories or tablets.

Always have your next pack of minipills ready before you finish your current pack. Do not take breaks between minipill packs. Unlike combination birth control pills, minipill packs do not contain a week of inactive pills.

It is imperative that you understand how to take minipills, and what to do if you miss a minipill. Understanding and following the directives on how to take your minipills contributes to having the highest level of effectiveness and protection.

1. **Minipill users must use a back up method of birth control** while waiting to start the initial cycle of minipills, as well as for the first 7 days of the initial minipill cycle. Also, when a minipill is missed, the backup method of birth control must be used for the next 48 hours.
2. **If you miss 1 minipill**, take the missed pill as soon as you remember. Take the current day's minipill at the scheduled time, even if it means taking 2 pills in 1 day. If you are more than 3 hours late taking a minipill, abstain from sex or use your backup method of birth control for the next 48 hours.
3. **If you miss 2 or more minipills in a row**, take 2 minipills as soon as you remember. The following day, take 2 minipills at the scheduled time. Abstain from sex or use your backup method of birth control for the next 48 hours.
4. **If you have spotting or bleeding between periods**, continue taking your scheduled minipills. Bleeding can be expected during the first few months a woman begins taking minipills. Bleeding is especially likely if you have missed 1 or more minipills. In most cases, bleeding is not serious and will often stop after a few days. If your bleeding is very heavy or if you have bad cramps, pain, or fever, please call our office.
5. **Some women have regular menstrual periods while on the minipill and some women do not.** If your menses have been regular while on the minipill, and your period does not begin within 4 to 6 weeks, please call our office. If you begin to have symptoms of pregnancy or you suspect that you may be pregnant, please call our office.

6. **If you become ill with vomiting and/or severe diarrhea**, continue your scheduled minipills. In addition, use your backup method of birth control for 48 hours after your illness. Using your backup method will give you extra protection should your illness or medication interfere with minipill effectiveness.
7. **If you decide you want to become pregnant**, stop using minipills and change to another method of birth control for one month. Once you no longer take minipills, your natural cycle should reestablish. We recommend you take a daily multivitamin for at least one month prior to attempting to conceive, and continue the multivitamin after conception, and through pregnancy.
8. **If you do not want to continue taking the minipill**, you may stop at anytime, even in the middle of the pack. Please note, the effectiveness and protection of the minipill does not continue after you stop taking the minipill. To be protected, you must begin using another method of birth control immediately.