

Help – I missed my pill(s)!

I missed one pill by less than 24 hours



Take it as soon as you remember and continue your pill pack

I missed one pill more than 24 hours or missed more than one pill



During Week One of pill pack

During Week Two or Three of pill pack

I missed one or more pills

I missed less than three pills

I missed three or more pills



Take one active pill* ASAP and continue taking one pill daily until end of pack.

Abstain from intercourse or use back-up contraception† for next seven days.

If you have had unprotected intercourse within the last five days consider using emergency contraception‡.

Take one active pill* ASAP. Continue taking rest of hormone pills in pack, discard placebo pills, (last seven pills in pack) and start a new pack.

You may experience some spotting/bleeding but not get your period this cycle.

Take one active pill* ASAP. Continue taking rest of hormone pills in pack, discard non hormonal pills, (last seven pills in pack) and start a new pack.

Abstain from intercourse or use back-up contraception† for next seven days.

If you have had unprotected intercourse within the last five days consider using emergency contraception‡.

Things to Remember

1. Always protect yourself from sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The pill helps to prevent pregnancy but does not prevent STIs. Use condoms each time you have sex.
2. Always use an **added method** of contraception (E.g., condom):
 - when waiting to start your pills.
 - during the first seven days of starting the pill.
 - if you vomit or have diarrhea.
 - when taking certain medications. (Ask your pharmacist or call the clinic to find out if any medications you are taking interfere with the pill's effectiveness).

Resources

Stay on Schedule (SOS) www.sexualityandu.ca

York Region www.york.ca

Sexual health clinics are located throughout York Region. Visit www.york.ca/health for locations.

For more information or to make an appointment, call *Health Connection* Sexual Health Line at **1-800-361-5653** TTY **1-800-465-7735**



1. Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (SOGC). Retrieved on July 27, 2010 www.sogc.org/guidelines/documents/gui219ECO0811.pdf

* Active pill is a pill that contains hormones. Active pills are the first 21 pills in a 28 pill package. The last 7 pills in a 28 day pack do not contain hormones.

† Back-up contraception (e.g. condoms).

‡ Emergency Contraceptive Pills (E.g., Plan B is available without a prescription if you are at risk for an unplanned pregnancy. It is recommended that they be taken within 72 hours of unprotected sex).

Taking the Birth Control Pill



When to start your pills – You have three options:

Option One

Quick Start

- Take your first birth control pill during your clinic appointment.
- Use a back-up method of birth control during the first seven days of pills. E.g. condoms.

OR

Option Two

First Day Start:

- Take your first birth control pill on the day you begin your period.

OR

Option Three

Sunday Start:

- Take your first birth control pill on the first Sunday **AFTER** your period **BEGINS**.
- You may still be bleeding when you start the pill.
- If your period starts on a Sunday, take your first pill that day.

Important!

Possible Benefits

- 99% effective against pregnancy.
- Decreased menstrual cramps.
- Lighter, shorter, more regular periods.
- Improvement in acne.
- Reduced risk of cysts of ovaries and benign breast disease.
- Decreased risk of cancer of the uterus and ovaries.

Possible Side Effects

- Headaches. (If severe or more frequent than usual, please call your doctor or clinic).
- Break-through bleeding or spotting between periods.
- Breast tenderness.
- Nausea. (Try taking your pill with food and eat regular meals)

If you experience any of these side effects, they will usually resolve within four to six months. If they continue longer, ask your doctor about trying a different pill.

Caution!

If you experience any of the following signs, seek medical attention immediately. Go to the nearest hospital emergency department and tell them that you are taking the pill.

Signs:

- Abdominal pain (severe).
- Chest pain (severe), shortness of breath.
- Headaches (severe), dizziness, weakness, numbness.
- Eye problems (vision loss or blurring), speech problems.
- Severe leg pain (calf or thigh).

Taking your Pill (28-day package)

- Take one pill every day for 28 days.
- Always take your pill at the same time every day.
- When you have finished one package, start a new package the very next day.
- There are **NO** pill free days.
- Your period will usually start during the last seven days of the package.
- The last seven pills in the package do not contain hormones.

What to avoid

If you are taking the birth control pill, it is strongly recommended that you:

- **STOP SMOKING** (cigarette smoking increases the risk of serious adverse effects on the heart and blood vessels).
- **ALWAYS USE SUNSCREEN** and avoid the use of tanning beds (the pill may make you more sensitive to ultraviolet radiation from the sun and tanning beds).

