

## What if I forget to take a pill?

### Less than 24 hours late

- take it as soon as you remember
- then take the next one at the usual time, you may end up taking two pills on the same day
- you will still be protected against pregnancy

### More than 24 hours late

- take it as soon as you remember
- then take the next one at the usual time, you may end up taking two pills on the same day
- throw away any other missed pills
- keep on taking the pills as usual **AND** use another form of contraception, like condoms or don't have sex for the next 7 days
- you may need emergency contraception

### Less than seven hormone pills left in your pack and missed one or more pills:

- continue to take the remaining hormone pills in the pack as soon as you remember
- **don't** have the break, (take the non-hormone pills) go straight on to the hormone pills in the next pack
- use other contraception (such as condoms), or don't have sex, for 7 days after the missed pills until the pill becomes effective again

## How well do they work?

If it's used correctly, the pill is 99.5% effective. In real life it can be less effective (93%). The pill might not work if you have vomiting, severe diarrhoea or if you are also taking certain herbal remedies or medications, including some epileptic medications. Talk to your doctor if you start any new medications.

## Where do I get the combined oral contraceptive pill?

The Pill is available at the pharmacy with a script from a doctor. Your doctor can advise you about the most suitable one for you and the cost of the different types of pills.

Family Planning NT also have a supply of some types of the Pill that you can purchase from us.

For further information please call:  
ph: (08 ) 89480144  
or  
visit [www.fpwnt.com.au](http://www.fpwnt.com.au)

**Family Planning Welfare Association of NT  
Head Office — Darwin**  
Unit 2, The Clock Tower,  
Dick Ward Drive  
Coconut Grove.  
ph: 08 8948 0144

**Palmerston Clinic**  
ph: 08 8948 0144

File: Global\pamphlets master coies\Contraception\Combined contraceptive pill updated March 2021

**Family Planning**  
Welfare Association of NT Inc.

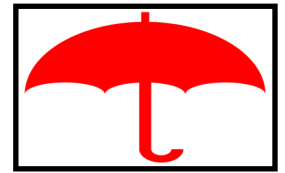
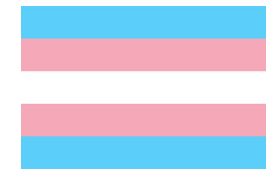
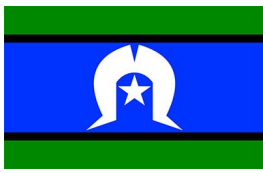
ABN: 38 812 238 738

# Combined oral contraceptive pill



## MISSION STATEMENT

*Family Planning Welfare Association of NT Inc will advocate for and provide enhanced reproductive and sexual health and well being to all Territorians. This will be achieved through the provision of best practice clinical care and contemporary education and information services.*



### What is the combined oral contraceptive pill?

The combined hormonal contraceptive pill is made up of two hormones, oestrogen and progesterone. These hormones are similar to the ones made in your ovaries. Many brands of the pill are available which all have different types and doses of these two hormones.

In Australia, most Pill packets contain either:

- 28 pills - 21 hormone pills, 7 non-hormone pills
- 28 pills - 24 hormone pills, 4 non-hormone pills

### How do they work?

You need to take a pill everyday. The hormone pills stop the ovaries releasing an egg and thicken the mucus around your cervix so that sperm can't enter the womb. When you take the non-hormone pills you will get a withdrawal bleed like a period.

### How do I take the oral contraceptive pill?

You can start the Pill at any time. If started during the first 5 days of your period it is effective straight away. If you start it at another time, it will take 7 days to start working. You will need to use another method of contraception like condoms for 7 days or not have sex for 7 days.

You need to take the Pill at the same time every day. Set a reminder on your phone or put your pill pack next to your toothbrush to help remember.

You can safely choose to skip your period by not taking the non-hormone pills. Talk to your doctor or nurse about how best to do this. If you are at risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) use condoms at the same time as taking the Pill.

### Advantages of combined oral contraceptive pill

- It is very effective when it is taken correctly
- Your fertility goes back to normal shortly after you stop taking it
- It reduces heavy bleeding
- It can reduce period pain and symptoms of endometriosis
- It makes periods more regular in people who have irregular periods
- It can improve premenstrual syndrome (PMS)
- It can improve acne
- It reduces the risk of some cancers including cancer of the ovary, bowel and uterus
- You can skip your periods altogether if they are heavy, painful or inconvenient.

### Disadvantages of combined oral contraceptive pill

- It doesn't protect against STIs
- It has to be taken at the same time every day
- Can't be used by those who can't take oestrogen for any medical reasons
- There is a small risk of deep vein thrombosis
- There is an extremely small risk of heart attack and stroke in some people (increased if you smoke, have high blood pressure or diabetes)
- Some people get spotting/breakthrough bleeding
- You can get hormonal side effects like:
  - ~Bloating
  - ~Headaches
  - ~Mood changes
  - ~Acne
  - ~Patchy brown marks on the skin of your face
  - ~Lowered interest in sex

Most side-effects usually settle down by your third pack of pills. If side-effects trouble you, your doctor or nurse might suggest changing to a different type of Pill or a different method of contraception.

### Reasons why you may not be able to take the combined oral contraceptive pill

If there are no medical reasons not to take the Pill, people can safely use the Pill up to the age of 50. There are some medical reasons where taking the Pill is not recommended. These include:

- a history of deep venous thrombosis (blood clot in a vein), stroke, heart attack or some other types of heart disease
- a condition which makes you more prone to blood clots
- severe liver problems or liver cancer
- certain types of migraine headaches
- breast cancer
- systemic lupus erythematosus with positive antiphospholipid antibodies

or if you are:

- over 35 years old and smoke
- have just had a baby (the Pill can generally be started 6 weeks after delivery)
- are taking other medicines which can reduce the effectiveness of the Pill including some epileptic medications and herbal remedies

Your doctor will help you decide if you can take the Pill or if there is a more suitable method if you have:

- high blood pressure
- diabetes
- a body mass index (BMI) of 35 Kg/m2 or more
- a family history of deep vein thrombosis
- gallbladder disease