

ADAMS PATTERSON GYNECOLOGY & OBSTETRICS

A DIVISION OF WOMEN'S CARE CENTER OF MEMPHIS

Birth Control Pills

1. Starting the first pack:

- A. The Sunday after your period begins, even if you are still bleeding
- B. The fifth day after your period begins, even if you are still bleeding
- C. The day your period begins
- D. Any time up to fourteen weeks after a Depo-Provera shot
- E. Any time while taking Micronor or NorQD without a break between the two types of pill, irregardless of bleeding (or absence of bleeding)

2. Continuing birth control pills:

- A. Take one a day, every day, about the same time each day, in the order that they come in the package, 365 days a year, no matter when bleeding may or may not occur.
- B. Pills are effective for the prevention of pregnancy once a patient has completed the first package and started the second.
- C. Pills are also effective for the prevention of pregnancy during the hormone-free week.

3. Too much bleeding on birth control pills:

- A. The patient should have been on the same pill without a break or missed pills for at least three months before this can be evaluated.
- B. If the bleeding occurs during the first part of the cycle, the patient may need more estrogen effect.
- C. If the bleeding occurs during the last part of the cycle, the patient may need more progesterone effect.
- D. Therefore, it is imperative to know when during the cycle the bleeding occurred to have the best chance at correcting the problem!

4. Too little bleeding on birth control pills:

- A. Is not a "problem" (point out the money saved on tampons) and poses no known medical risk or side effect in the long run, and does not alter effectiveness
- B. If the patient knows that she took her pills daily, by the rules, she is not pregnant, and should continue taking the pills in the order in which they are supplied without worry
- C. If the patient has high anxiety over pill amenorrhea even after reassurance, consult the doctor for an alternate

5. Stopping birth control pills

- A. Pills may be stopped at any time
- B. The hormones in the pill are gone from the system in one day, which is why you have to take them every day. Therefore, alternate birth control should be used immediately, if desired
- C. If pregnancy is desired, it may be attempted immediately upon stopping the pills. (Start a folate supplement) The first egg a woman makes is just as good as any egg she will make...

6. Types of pill

A. Norithindrone (progesterone) only

NorQD, Micronor

Are taken every day without a pill-free interval, whether or not bleeding occurs

Dosing at the same time each day is very important

Only recommended for mothers nursing full-time

Does not interfere with milk supply

Should be swapped to a combination pill as soon as nursing is decreased

B. **Combination pills (estrogen + progesterone)**

All contain ethinyl estradiol in 0.02, 0.03, 0.035, or 0.05 mg doses, except ON 1/50, which has mestranol

The progesterone varies according to the manufacturer, and mg doses vary greatly according to the potency of the progesterone

Are made in “monophasic” and “multiphasic” variations

The FDA considers all pills to be equally effective in preventing pregnancy

Combination pill use decreases a person’s risk of cancer of the ovary, cancer of the endometrium and colon cancer, and the longer pills are used, the lower these risks become.

Combination pill use also decreases a person’s risk of endometriosis, uterine fibroids, anemia, and rheumatoid arthritis

Pills have not been proven to change a person’s personal breast cancer risk in either direction

Women over age 35 who smoke should not take birth control pills, due to the increased risk of thrombotic myocardial infarction. A woman should be a nonsmoker for at least six months before this risk changes.

Pills do not cause weight gain. Excess calories cause weight gain.

C. **Morning after pills**

Are taken within 72 hours of intercourse, but the sooner the better!

Work by causing the endometrium to slough, so there is nowhere for the fertilized egg to implant

Cause bleeding like a period, or sometimes more, within a day or two of taking

Do not prevent ectopic pregnancy

If a patient needs the morning after pill, she should also be given an appointment to discuss reliable contraception

If a patient does not have a period within three weeks of taking the morning after pill, she needs a pregnancy test and evaluation