

## **SOUTHDALE PEDIATRIC ASSOCIATES, LTD.**

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### **Oral Contraceptive Pills**

#### Patient Information

#### How oral contraceptive pills work:

The hormones in birth control pills prevent pregnancy by preventing the release of an egg from the ovary.

When oral contraceptive pills are taken appropriately, the chance of becoming pregnant is less than 1 in 100. However, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) states that with typical use by teenagers, the risk of becoming pregnant is 9 in 100. Using 2 forms of birth control is advised to prevent pregnancy.

The birth control pill does NOT protect you from HIV (AIDS) or other sexually transmitted diseases and we advise that you ALWAYS use a condom!

#### Taking your pill:

- Always take the pill at approximately the same time each day. The best time is ½ hour after a meal or snack at bedtime. Try to think of something you do every day, so you can take your pill at the same time (such as brushing your teeth). The pill only works if taken every day, even if you don't have sex very often.
- Your pill pack has two kinds of pills: "active" pills with hormone and "placebo" pills without hormone. You need to take all the active pills to prevent pregnancy. Taking the placebos is the trigger for your period. Take the placebo pills unless your health care provider tells you otherwise. The placebo pills do not contain sugar. Take one pill every day without fail. When you finish your last pill in the package, start the first pill in a new package the next day. This means you will be taking pills during your period. Never skip a day!

#### When to start your first pack of pills:

Your health care provider will decide one of two schedules to start your pills after discussing with you.

#### **Option A: Sunday start-**

If you are taking pills for the first time, take the first pill of your package on the Sunday following the start of your next period, even if you have stopped bleeding before that day.

The pill will become effective after you take it for 7 days.

#### **Option B: First day start-**

Start your pills on the first day of your next period, and then take one pill a day. Because you start the pill on the first day of your period, you will have 2 periods during your first package (1<sup>st</sup> week and 4<sup>th</sup> week). After that, you will have only one period each package.

#### What to do if you miss a pill:

- If you forget to take 1 pill, take it as soon as you remember, then take your regular pill for that day at the same time you usually take your pill. If this means taking 2 pills at once, that's ok.
- If you miss two pills, take 2 pills a day for the next two days then finish your pack of pills as usual. You are at risk of getting pregnant in the 7 days after missing pills. Use condoms or abstain from sex until you've taken a full week of pills again.

- If you miss more than 2 pills, throw out the pack and start a new pack. Use a condom or abstain from sex until you've taken a week of pills again.
- If you miss a period and have taken every pill on time, begin your next pack as usual but come into the clinic for a pregnancy test.
- If you miss a period and may have forgotten or been late with one or more pills, call your health provider immediately and make arrangements to come in.

*If you bleed between your periods:*

Breakthrough bleeding is common and expected in the first 3 months of pill use, especially if pills are missed or taken late. The bleeding can be as light as spotting or as heavy as a normal menstrual period. DO NOT skip or stop your pills. The bleeding will become less of a problem by the third cycle.

*Call your doctor right away if you have:*

- Severe stomach or chest pain
- Severe headaches
- Difficulty breathing
- Blurred vision or difficulty seeing
- Severe leg pain or swelling

*Other benefits of oral contraceptive pills:*

- Lighter, less painful and more regular periods
- Decreased acne and less unwanted hair growth
- Fewer ovarian cysts
- Fewer benign (harmless) breast lumps.
- Lower risk of ovarian and uterine cancer
- Stronger bones

*What are the risks?*

Women taking birth control pills have a small increased risk of getting a blood clot of the leg or lung. This risk is very low: about 1 in 15,000 women.

While you are on the pill, you should be seen every year. This appointment is required by your health care provider before your pill will be renewed or refilled.