

# What to expect with Birth Control Pills



## Do birth control pills have side effects?

Birth control pills have female hormones that are a lot like the hormones your body makes.

Because of these hormones, you may have some of these changes when you take birth control pills:

- ◆ Feeling of being sick to your stomach (nausea)
- ◆ Weight changes
- ◆ Sore or full breasts
- ◆ Spotting or a little bleeding between periods
- ◆ Headaches
- ◆ Sad or nervous feelings
- ◆ Feel tired (more than usual)
- ◆ Dizziness

## Nausea (Feeling sick to your stomach)

When you first take birth control pills, you may have some feelings of being sick to your stomach. This usually stops within a few days or weeks. Many women take their pill with food before they go to bed at night to solve this problem.

## Weight changes

Birth control pills can cause some women to gain a few pounds, while others gain no weight. Recent research has shown that women who take pills do not typically gain any more weight than they would gain without taking pills. It is important

to control your weight by having a good diet and regular exercise.

## Sore or full breasts

Women who take birth control pills may have sore or full breasts. Often, this happens during the first few days after you start taking pills from a new pack. Some women have this problem all the time or not at all.

If the fullness in your breasts hurts too much, try wearing a sports bra or a bra that gives you extra support.

CONTINUED ON BACK

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### What do I need to know about taking birth control pills?

Birth control pills are a good choice for many women.

Benefits of birth control pills: Many women have lighter periods with fewer cramps and PMS symptoms, as well as less problems with acne when taking some types of pills. Taking pills does not interrupt sex. Pills protect against ovarian cancer, endometrial cancer, benign breast disease, and ovarian cysts.

**Remember:** In order for birth control pills to work, you must start your pills at the right time and take your pills at the same time each day.

If you forget a pill, take it as soon as you remember it, then take the next pill at the usual time. Use a back-up method such as condoms for a week.

If you forget 2 or more pills, you may need emergency contraception. Talk to your health care provider if this occurs.

Contact your doctor right away or go to the emergency room if you have any of the following warning signs:

- Severe leg pain;
- Sudden chest pain;
- Headaches, dizziness or fainting;
- Eye problems (if you see flashing lights, have fuzzy vision, or suddenly can't see);

- Sudden pain in your stomach or belly

### What do I do if I want to get pregnant?

Taking birth control pills does not hurt your chances of getting pregnant later. If you decide that you want to become pregnant, simply stop taking the pills.

When women stop taking birth control pills, some get pregnant within a few months and almost all women get pregnant within one year. This is the same whether you have taken birth control pills for a long or short time.

### If you have concerns or questions:

Call \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Your next visit is on \_\_\_\_\_

**Birth control pills do not protect you from AIDS or other diseases you can get when you have sex. Use a latex condom to protect yourself.**