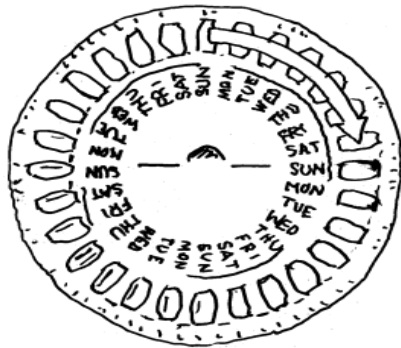


Birth Control Instruction Sheet



Starting Birth Control

Traditional Sunday Start: take the first pill on the first Sunday after your period starts.

For example if your period starts on a Sunday, start your pills that day.

If your period starts on a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday or Saturday, start your pills on the Sunday of that week

Same Day Start: take your first pill within 24 hours of a negative pregnancy test at Student Health

Most rectangular pill packs will have stickers with the days of the week that can be placed above the first row of pills. Circular pill packs can be "dialed" around to the desired day of the week for the start date.

Use a **BACKUP METHOD** (foam, condoms, sponge) along with the pills for the first month.

Take a pill every day until you finish a pack then start a new pack. Do not skip any days between packs.

It is very important to take your pills every day at the same time. If you miss or take any pills late, you may spot or bleed and should use a back-up method until you start the next pack of pills. Please read the package insert for instructions on what to do if you miss a pill. Birth control pills **do not** protect you against sexually transmitted diseases. **Use condoms every time you have sex to protect yourself from STDs.**

Adjusting to the Pill

Some women may notice minor changes when first starting the pill. These changes are usually greatly improved or go away completely after the first 2 to 3 months. Possible changes may include:

Breast tenderness or fullness

Nausea- taking pills with food should help

Spotting or breakthrough bleeding (this can also be a symptom of chlamydia – see info below)

Very short and light periods

Weight gain/fluid retention - usually not greater than 2-3 pounds

Mood changes - usually mild and temporary

Call the clinic if these changes are severe or do not go away after the first two to three months.

Danger Signs (Go to an emergency room immediately if the following occur)

ABDOMINAL PAIN (severe) or jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes)

CHEST PAIN (severe), shortness of breath, coughing up blood

HEADACHE (severe), weakness or numbness of face, arm or leg

EYE PROBLEMS - vision loss or blurring, speech problems

SEVERE LEG PAIN - redness, swelling of calf or thigh

Chlamydia Screening: The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends screening at least annually for chlamydia in all sexually active women age 25 years and younger. Chlamydia is the most frequently reported bacterial STD in the United States and is known as a "silent" disease because the majority of infected people have no symptoms. Chlamydia can be easily treated and cured with antibiotics. Untreated chlamydia can lead to severe pelvic infections, chronic pelvic pain, infertility, and potentially fatal ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outside the uterus).