

## Oral Contraceptive Pill

### Combined Oral Contraceptives

The combined oral contraceptive pill is one of the most effective contraceptive methods when used correctly. With many products on the market, each a combination of the hormones oestrogen and progestogen, your GP will have prescribed the one that suits you best and each product is around 99% effective at preventing pregnancy when taken according to the manufacturer's instructions.

It works by stopping monthly ovulation, stops sperm reaching an egg if ovulation does occur and also prevents any fertilised egg implanting in the womb. Other advantages include:

- It's effects are easily reversible
- Reduces heavy periods and painful periods
- Periods are more regular
- Reduces ovarian cysts and fibroids
- Reduces the risk of Pelvic Inflammatory disease
- Decreases the risk of some cancers such as ovarian, endometrial and benign breast disease
- Can improve acne

### Mini-Pill

Unlike the combined-pill the mini-pill contains only one hormone, progestogen. As this comes in more than one form, your GP will have prescribed the one that suits you best and each product is around 99% effective at preventing pregnancy when taken according to the manufacturer's instructions. It may have been selected for you as you are over 35 years of age, are breastfeeding, or you cannot take a contraceptive pill that contains oestrogen.

It works by altering the cervical mucus to prevent sperm penetration and it may prevent ovulation in some women especially if they are taking a mini-pill containing desogestrel. However, there are some instances where the mini-pill should be used with caution or not at all.

However there are some instances where the combined oral contraceptive should be used with caution or not at all. The patient information leaflet provided in your particular brand of pill that you are currently prescribed will provide you with all the detail of potential cautions, side effects, and contraindications to its use as well as how you should take your pill correctly and when it may be necessary to stop it or use additional contraceptive measures such as condoms.

Generally you have a seven day break after 21 days of using the combined-pill and this is the time when you will have a period. Some combined pills have seven inactive pills taken during the break but it will still result in a period.

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Progestogen only pills come in packs of 28 and they are taken continuously with no seven-day break. For it to be effective it should be taken at roughly the same time every day. There are no breaks between packs. The mini-pill often leads to lighter, less painful periods but for some women it can cause their period to be more irregular.

Further information can be found in the Patient Information Leaflet which is provided with every treatment that Dr Andrews supplies.