

THE ORAL CONTRACEPTIVE OR "PILL"

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT ORAL CONTRACEPTIVE PILLS

What is "the pill"?

- The pill is an oral means of contraception that is 99 percent effective when taken properly.
- These are pills that contain low doses of two (2) hormones- estrogen and progestin-like the natural hormones oestrogen and progesterone that a woman's body produces during her reproductive years

How Does it Work?

One pill is taken every day for 21 or 28 days, depending on the brand. When taken correctly, the hormones cause small changes in the body which include the following:

- the ovaries stop releasing eggs;
- the cervical mucus thickens thereby decreasing the sperm's ability to penetrate through to the womb; and
- the lining of the uterus does not develop enough for a fertilized egg to implant.

Is it Safe?

For most healthy young women, especially non-smokers, the pill is a very safe, effective method of birth control.

How do I Take the pill?

One pill should be taken each day until the pack is empty.

With 28-pill packs, when the pack is finished, it is advised that the first pill from the next pack should be taken on the next day.

With 21-pill packs, once the last pill from one pack is taken, it is advised to wait for seven (7) days (no more) and then take the first pill from the next pack. If a pack is started late, this may put a woman at risk of pregnancy.

Who can use the pill?

Family Health International has developed checklists for screening clients who want to start some contraceptive methods, for more information on the pill, please visit the link provided below from the Family Health International website which gives you more information on the pill (Combined Oral Contraceptives).

<http://www.fhi.org/NR/rdonlyres/e37xubhms7todjt77ld2ap4mdq3ig2xgnxvrg3vysdwgympkysyujfasqjdwmdmq3mun62unkisvbg/COCchecklistenrh1.pdf>

Frequently Asked Questions

For other information and frequently asked questions and answers about the Pill please refer to

<http://info.k4health.org/globalhandbook/handbook.pdf>

(Pages 15-23)