



## REQUEST FOR "BIRTH CONTROL PILLS" (COMBINED ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES)

### What is the "birth control pill"?

Oral contraceptives or "the pill" are tablets taken once a day to prevent pregnancy.

### How does the birth control pill work?

The pill contains the hormones estrogen and progestin, substances that act like natural hormones in the body. These substances work together to:

- stop the ovary from releasing an egg each month
- make it hard for sperm to enter the cervix
- make it harder for the egg to implant in the uterus.

If the pill is used correctly, it works very well to prevent pregnancy. For every 1,000 women using the pill, only three women per year will get pregnant.

The pill may not work as well to prevent pregnancy if you are also taking certain kinds of medication. Always let your healthcare provider know about any medications you are taking.

### Who can use the pill?

Women of any reproductive age can use the pill, except women who:

- are pregnant or have had a baby in the last three weeks;
- are breastfeeding during the first six weeks after having a baby;
- have high blood pressure;
- have had breast cancer;
- have a history or family history of blood clots;
- are 35 years of age or older and smoke;
- have a history of heart disease, stroke, or severe chest pain;
- have a history of migraines;
- have diabetes;
- have gall bladder disease; or
- have liver tumors, active hepatitis, jaundice, or severe cirrhosis.

If you are a teen and you decide to take the pill, we suggest that you to talk to your family about it.

### What are the health benefits of the pill?

The pill protects against:

- cancer of the ovaries and of the lining of the uterus
- pregnancy outside the uterus ("ectopic" or "tubal" pregnancies)
- breast cysts
- cramps and pain during periods
- irregular or heavy bleeding.

### What are the side effects of the pill?

Taking the pill may cause minor side effects, which may be different for each woman. Some women may have small amounts of bleeding between periods. This is not harmful and usually goes away after the third month on the pill. However, if you have a missed period while you are on the pill, call your healthcare provider.

Another side effect that some women have is upset stomach during the first month on the pill. Taking the pill just before going to bed can help this problem. As for weight changes, most pill-users have no weight change at all. Although some women gain weight when taking the pill, an equal number actually lose weight. Weight gain or loss is more likely caused by changes in diet than by taking the pill. Some women may also experience breast tenderness, headaches, or mood changes.

### Does the pill protect against STDs and AIDS?

The pill will not protect you against HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, or against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Women at risk of HIV/AIDS or STDs should use a female condom or a male latex condom in addition to the pill to prevent disease. If you or your partner is allergic to latex, use polyurethane condoms. Your healthcare provider can help you decide if you are at risk of HIV/AIDS or STDs.

### What do I need to know about taking the pill?

There are two important things to remember about taking the pill:

- Your healthcare provider will tell you which day to start taking your pills. After that, it is important that you start each new pill pack on the same day of the week, no matter when your period starts or ends.
- It is important to remember to take your pill at the same time each day. Choose the best time of day for you when you first start taking the pill, and then be sure to take them at the same time every day after that. It is important that you take a pill every day. Use all your pills.

### What if I forget to take a pill?

If you forget to take a pill at the correct time, take it as soon as you remember and use a back-up method of birth control (such as condoms). You may have spotting if you are late with a pill. If you forget to take two or more pills in a row, continue to use a backup method of birth control in addition to the rest of the pills in your pack and tell your health care provider.

### Call your healthcare provider if you have any of the following "ACHES":

- A - Abdominal pain (severe), yellow skin or eyes
- C - Chest pain (severe cough, shortness of breath, or pain when breathing in)
- H - Headache, dizziness, weakness, or numbness, especially if on only one side of the head
- E - Eye problems (blurred vision or loss of vision), speech problems
- S - Severe leg pain or swelling

**If you have questions about side effects or you have missed taking your pills, don't stop taking them! Call your healthcare provider or clinic right away!**

**I have read and understand the information above.**

Patient Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**The client has been counseled, provided with the appropriate informational material, and understands the content of both.**

Counselor/Provider signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print counselor/provider name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of patient: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Chart #: \_\_\_\_\_

Interpreter: \_\_\_\_\_