

Mini-Pill

The Mini-pill or progestogen only pill is also a very effective method of contraception. It is a low dose of only one hormone (progestogen) and does not contain any oestrogen. Each pack is made of 28 active or hormonal tablets. There are no sugar pills in the pack.

It is usually a suitable choice for women who are unable to take the Pill because of medical reasons. It is suitable for women who are breastfeeding and can be continued when the baby is weaned.

It is important to remember that you must take the mini-pill at the same time everyday, otherwise it may not work. If you are more than 3 hours late with a mini-pill it stops working. If you have any concerns, make sure you talk to your doctor.

There are fewer side effects than with the combined pill but see your doctor or sexual healthcare professional if you're experiencing anything unusual.

Both the Pill and the mini-pill are **only available on prescription** from a doctor. It is important to speak to your doctor or sexual healthcare professional about choosing the best pill to suit you.

The condom

Condoms also reduce the risk of pregnancy and reduce the risk of STIs.

It is important to use a condom every time you have sex to protect yourself against HIV and other STIs.

Condoms are 97% effective at protecting you from pregnancy if used properly. To maximise your protection against pregnancy, use the Pill to be sure.

A condom should be used only once. Be sure to put it on and take it off correctly and then throw it away.

How it works

The most common type of condom is a fine rubber sheath which is worn on an erect (stiff) penis.

The condom collects the semen – the fluid that contains sperm – preventing it from entering the vagina, therefore decreasing the risk of pregnancy, or from entering the vagina mouth or anus reducing the risk of STIs. It also acts as a barrier to decrease the risk of STIs that are passed on by skin to skin contact.

Condoms need to be stored in a cool place and used before the expiry date, otherwise they may break. Do not use oil based lubricants such as petroleum jelly or massage oil as these can also cause the condom to break. Water-based lubricants such as K-Y Jelly, and spermicidal creams or pessaries are safe.

Condoms are available at SH&FPA Centres, pharmacies, sexual health clinics, vending machines and supermarkets.

The Pill + condom for best protection

The only way to be absolutely sure you will not become pregnant or contract a STI is not to have sex. But if you choose to have sex, do so safely. Be in control of your sexual health by always using condoms and talking to your doctor about the best contraceptive for you.

The Pill + condom offers one of the best possible options to protect against pregnancy and STIs.

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Contraception is about choice

Working out which option is best for you can sometimes be confusing but it is important to take the time to make sure that you have the best protection before you have sex.

This information will prepare you to talk to your doctor or sexual healthcare professional and help you make the right decision about the best choice of contraception for you.

Are you ready?

Double Protection

The Pill + condom is sometimes referred to as hormonal (the Pill) plus barrier (condom) contraception. It is an effective way to protect yourself against pregnancy and reduce your risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

While there is a range of different methods of contraception available today, the Pill (oral contraception) is one of the most effective ways to protect yourself against pregnancy and the condom is an effective method in reducing the risk of STIs.

If used correctly and according to instructions, the contraceptive pill is 99% effective in reducing pregnancy. Condoms used correctly are 97% effective in reducing pregnancy and greatly reduce the risk of STIs.

To make sure you're protected against both pregnancy and STIs, use the Pill + condom for best protection.

Why the Pill + condom ?

You might be asking yourself;

"Why do I need to use both the Pill and a condom?"

When used properly, the **Pill is 99% effective in reducing the risk of pregnancy**. Many women also experience additional benefits when taking the Pill, including reducing pre-menstrual symptoms, lighter periods and reduced risk of certain cancers. But the Pill doesn't protect you against STIs.

The **condom is an effective way to reduce your risk of STIs** and offers 97% protection against pregnancy when used properly. So it is important to use both methods of highly effective protection to be completely sure.

We all know the only way to be absolutely sure you will not fall pregnant or contract a STI is not to have sex. But if you choose to have sex, do so safely. Be in control of your health by always using condoms and talk to your doctor or sexual healthcare professional about the best contraceptive for you.

The Pill

The Pill is the most commonly used type of oral contraception.

Every day, 70 million women take the Pill worldwide.

There are two forms of oral contraceptives available in Australia - the combined pill usually called 'the Pill' and the progestogen-only pill, or 'mini-pill'. Within these two categories there are many types of pills. It is important to speak to your doctor or sexual healthcare professional who will advise you on the best option.

Following is information on how the Pill works, how to take it, some advantages and things to consider.

The Pill (combined pill)

The Pill is made up of two hormones – oestrogen and progestogen – similar to those found naturally in your body. Each pack consists of 21 active or hormone pills and 7 sugar or placebo pills. A cycle begins with the first active pill after the sugar pill, and ends with the last of the sugar pills.

How does it work?

The Pill prevents you from falling pregnant by stopping your ovaries from releasing an egg each month. It also thickens the mucus at the entrance to the uterus, and changes the lining of the uterus itself so that it is less suitable to receive a fertilised egg.

Benefits of the Pill

Taking the Pill has been shown to reduce the chance of cancer of the ovaries, cancer of the endometrium (the lining of the womb), non-cancerous breast lumps, anaemia (low iron count), and cysts on the ovaries.

The Pill doesn't interfere with sex and is taken as part of your daily routine.

Many women taking the Pill also experience:

- **Shorter, lighter, more regular and less painful periods**
- **Reduced pre-menstrual symptoms (fatigue, bloating, mood swings)**
- **Improved appearance of skin/reduced acne**

Taking the Pill

The most important thing to remember is try to take the Pill at about the same time each day or night. This increases its effectiveness.

Talk to your doctor or sexual healthcare professional if you have any concerns about how to take the Pill correctly.

There are many different types of oral contraceptives.

If you are LESS than 24 hours late taking a pill, take it as soon as you remember, and then take the next one at the usual time. You will still be protected against getting pregnant.

If you are more than 24 hours late, or have missed MORE than one pill, take a pill when you remember, and the next pill at the usual time but use other contraception (condoms) until you have had 7 active pills in a row. You may need emergency contraception. If you are concerned, talk to your doctor or healthcare professional for more information.

If you experience vomiting or diarrhoea, the Pill might lose its effectiveness and you could be at risk of falling pregnant. Some medications including herbal remedies may reduce the effectiveness of the Pill, so always check with your doctor.

Following the Pill + condom plan when you have sex will ensure you're well protected against pregnancy and have reduced your risk of STIs.

Considerations

Most women can take the Pill but you should not take it if you have had serious conditions such as a stroke, heart attack or blood clot, certain cancers, certain types of diagnosed migraine or have other medical conditions. Ask your doctor or sexual healthcare professional if you're unsure.

Most women feel fine when they're on the Pill but it is common to have some side effects such as irregular bleeding, sore breasts and nausea at first. This is quite normal and usually settles down by your third packet of pills.

Every woman is different and will react differently to the Pill. There are many different types of oral contraceptives. If you've tried the Pill before and experienced some unwanted effects, speak to your doctor or sexual healthcare professional and they may suggest you try another type of Pill that might suit you better.

