

## Information About PROGESTIN-ONLY PILLS (“MINIPILLS”)

### ***What are progestin-only pills?***

Progestin-only birth control pills “POPs” or the Minipill is a birth control method made up of one hormone, progestin, and taken by mouth every day like regular birth control pills.

### ***How do progestin-only pills work?***

Like birth control pills, the progestin Minipill works by releasing a female hormone in your body. This hormone prevents pregnancy in the following ways:

It may:

- Prevent the body from releasing an egg that could be fertilized by a man’s sperm
- Cause changes in the cervical mucus making it more difficult for a man’s sperm to enter the uterus (womb)

### ***How well does progestin-only pills work?***

Minipills work very well if you remember to take them. They must be taken on time every day. They have the same amount of hormone for all 28 days. The Minipill is slightly less effective than regular birth control pills. They do not hurt your chances of having a baby in the future.

### ***You Should Not Use Progestin-Only pills if:***

- You are pregnant or think you may be pregnant  
You have bleeding from your vagina and do not know why  
you have breast cancer
- You have liver disease



### ***Are there warning signs I need to watch for?***

- Very bad lower stomach pain (may be a sign of pregnancy)
- Delayed period after several months of regular periods (may be a sign of pregnancy)
- Very painful headaches

### ***What are the possible side effects of progestin-only birth control pills?***

- You may have irregular bleeding or spotting in the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> month on the Minipill
- Your period may be so light that there is only a brown stain
- You may skip your period several times a year on the Minipill
- You might have bloating
- You may gain or lose 5 pounds
- You could have mood swings

Some medications can cause low-dose contraceptives, like the Minipill, to not work. Tell your doctor or nurse about any medicines you take.

After stopping the Minipill you can get pregnant right away. If you don’t want to get pregnant, start using another method of birth control.

### **REMEMBER:**

*Be careful!  
Take the Minipill at the same  
time every day*

## Information about PROGESTIN-ONLY PILLS (“MINIPILL”), continued

### *How do I take progestin-only pills?*

You can start your first pack of pills:

- First day your period starts;
- First Sunday after your period starts; or,
- At a time determined by your doctor or nurse.

*I should begin taking the Minipill on:* \_\_\_\_\_

- Try to take the Minipill close to the same time every day. They work best this way. If it makes you feel sick first thing in the morning, take it with dinner or at bedtime.
- Tell your doctor or nurse about any medicines you are taking.
- If you have the flu, vomit (throw-up) or have diarrhea use a back-up method, such as condoms.

Use condoms every time you have sex for the next 48 hours (2 days) until you are better or have finished taking the medicine.

### *What do I do if I forget to take the pill?*

#### **If you forget 1 Minipill:**

- Take it as soon as you remember. It is ok to take 2 pills at the same time. Use a back-up method for 48 hours (2 days), even if you are only 3 hours late taking your pill.

#### **If you forget 2 or more Minipills:**

- Take 2 pills as soon as you remember and take 2 pills the next day. Then return to 1 pill every day. Use your back-up method for the next 7 days. If your period does not start within 45 days, you may be pregnant.

### *Can I breastfeed my baby if I use the Minipill for birth control?*

**Yes!** Progestin-only methods such as the Minipill are preferred if a hormonal method of birth control is used while breastfeeding.

### *Where can I get the Minipill?*

You can get the Minipill at your local health department, a family planning clinic or a doctor's office.

### *If you are thinking about stopping the Minipill for birth control!*

Before you stop taking the Minipill, call your doctor or nurse to talk about it.

#### **REMEMBER:**

*The Minipill does not protect you against HIV or any other sexually transmitted infections.*

*Use condoms to protect yourself each time you have sex.*

*If you have any questions, call us at*

\_\_\_\_\_.