

## The pill may be affected by

- medication for epilepsy
- rifampicin for Tb
- medication for HIV infection
- laxatives
- St John's Wort.

If you have unprotected sexual intercourse contact a Family Planning Clinic or your doctor for **emergency contraception** within 72 hours (24 hours if possible). The sooner the better.

Your Health Professional

[familyplanning.org.nz](http://familyplanning.org.nz)

## How to take your pill: Combined Oral Contraceptive Pill Continuous Pill Taking

Start your pill on .....

Take one pill at the same time every day until all the hormone pills are finished

Start your next packet on .....

and take all the hormone pills. Continue like this, taking all the hormone pills without a break. You should not get a withdrawal bleed.

### If you want to have a withdrawal bleed:

1. Check you haven't missed any hormone pills in the last 7 days.

If you have missed one or more hormone pills, then keep taking hormone pills until you have had a hormone pill each day for 7 days.

2. Stop taking your hormone pills for 7 days.

You can stop for less than 7 days if you only want a short withdrawal bleed.

3. Start taking your hormone pills again and keep going as above.

*It is important that you do NOT miss more than 7 hormone pills.*

*You need to start taking hormone pills after 7 days even if you are still bleeding, or you will not be protected against pregnancy.*

## Missed Pills

If you miss more than 8 hormone pills you need to use the 7 day rule

### The 7 day rule

- You will not be safe until you have taken 7 hormone pills in a row
- Use another method of contraception such as condoms or do not have sexual intercourse while taking the 7 hormone pills
- If during this time a condom breaks or slips off, you will need an emergency contraceptive pill (ECP)
- If there are less than 7 hormone pills left in the pack, finish the hormone pills and start your new pack immediately (miss the 7 inactive pills or the 7 day break)

If you miss one or more pills, you may get spotting or bleeding. You will be safe against getting pregnant unless you have missed more than 8 hormone pills.

If you vomit or have severe diarrhoea for a week or more, you should follow the 7 day rule.

## When first starting the pill

Some people notice changes such as feeling sick (especially if the pill is taken on an empty stomach), tender breasts and unexpected vaginal bleeding. These usually improve with time.

If you are concerned about any changes, we recommend that you do not stop the pill but phone for advice.

Your period may be lighter than usual, but if you miss your period, do not stop the pill - phone for advice.

## Contact a Family Planning Clinic or your doctor at once if you have

- sudden chest pain or cough up blood or become short of breath
- a painful calf (lower part of the leg)
- a severe headache which affects your vision, speech, arms or legs.

Ask your health professional whether any new medicine will affect your contraceptive pill.

## Temporary risk factors

- plane flights
- high altitude
- surgery
- temporary immobility.