



## REQUEST FOR PROGESTIN-ONLY PILLS (MINIPILLS)

### What are progestin-only contraceptive pills?

Progestin-only pills are also called the "minipill." They are different from combined birth control pills because they contain only one hormone (progestin) instead of two (progestin and estrogen).

### How do minipills work?

Minipills may prevent pregnancy in several ways; minipills make the mucus from a woman's cervix thicker, which makes it harder for sperm to reach and fertilize the egg. Then pills can also stop a woman's body from releasing an egg during her monthly menstrual cycle.

For every 100 women using the minipill, about 7 per year will get pregnant.

The minipill 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.

### How are minipills taken?

You take one pill every day. However, you should take the minipill at the same time every day. If you change the time you take your pill each day by even a few hours, you will greatly increase your chances of getting pregnant.

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

If you forget to take a minipill:

1. Take your missed pill as soon as you remember.
2. Then take your next pill at the regular time.
3. Use a backup method of birth control (such as condoms) for at least 48 hours.

If you have unprotected sex after forgetting to take your minipill, ask your healthcare provider about emergency contraception.

### Who can use minipills?

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

- are pregnant;
- have had breast cancer;
- have unexplained vaginal bleeding; or
- have liver tumors, active hepatitis, jaundice, or severe cirrhosis.

If you have a seizure disorder, talk to your healthcare provider. The minipill may not be right for you.

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

What are the side effects of minipills?

The most common side effect of the minipill is irregular menstrual bleeding. Minipill users often have spotting or bleeding in the middle of the cycle or no period at all. Women may also have irregular cycles (shorter or longer times between periods). Over time, these side effects may disappear. Less common side effects of minipills include depression, anxiety, and fatigue.

Are there any health risks from taking minipills?

Minipills are very safe. Because they don't contain estrogen, they can be used by women who cannot or should not use combined oral contraceptives, such as women with a history of blood clots, high blood pressure, or cigarette smokers over the age of 35 years.

Are minipills safe for breastfeeding women?

Yes. Using minipills while you are breastfeeding will not harm your baby and might actually help increase the amount of milk you produce. Speak with your healthcare provider about when you can begin taking the minipill.

Do minipills protect against STDs and AIDS?

Minipills 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 minipills 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.

**If you have any questions about minipills, ask your health care provider.**

You should call the clinic for follow-up and counseling if you have any of the following:

- severe pain in your lower abdomen
- a late period (if you usually have regular monthly periods)
- severe headaches
- questions if a pill is missed or taken too late.

**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: \_\_\_\_\_