



## PROGESTIN-ONLY PILL

### What is the progestin-only pill?

The progestin-only pill (POP), also known as Micronor®, is a pill taken by mouth every day at the same time to prevent pregnancy. The POP contains only one hormone - progestin. The POP is 92 to 99.7 per cent effective if taken at the same time every day.

### How does the POP work?

The POP changes the mucus in the cervix making it harder for sperm to enter the uterus. In some people, the POP prevents the ovaries from releasing an egg each month (ovulation) and changes the lining of the uterus making it difficult for an egg to attach itself.

### Who can use the POP?

Anyone seeking a reliable and reversible method of birth control. The POP may be a good option for an individual who is unable to take estrogen or someone who is breastfeeding. The POP may also be a good option for people over the age of 35 who smoke or experience migraine headaches.

### How do I use the POP?

Begin taking the POP on the first day of your period. It is important to take your pill at the same time each day to avoid pregnancy. Try to take your POP with a scheduled activity such as a shower or breakfast. The POP is only available in a 28-day pack; take one pill every day for 28 days. There is no hormone-free interval. Start a new pack of pills after completing the previous pack.

### Back-up?

For the first seven days when you begin the POP, your body is adjusting to the hormones and you are at risk of pregnancy. Use a backup method of birth control such as condoms during the first week of taking POP.

### If you miss a pill, follow these directions:

**If you miss a pill by more than three hours** - take it as soon as you remember. Take the next pill at the regular time. This may mean you are taking two pills in one day. Use a backup method of birth control if you have sex in the next 48 hours.

**If you miss two or more pills in a row** - take two pills per day for two days. Use a backup method of birth control if you have sex in the next 48 hours.

If you have unprotected sex after a missed pill, you should use emergency contraception.

## What are the advantages and possible side effects of the POP?

### Advantages

- Decreased menstrual bleeding
- No more periods (up to 10% of users)
- Decreased menstrual cramping and premenstrual symptoms

### Possible side effects

These side effects will likely resolve within the first three months:

- Irregular bleeding
- Headache
- Bloating
- Acne
- Breast tenderness

### Remember:

The pill does not protect you against sexually transmitted and blood borne infections (STBBIs) including HIV. Use condoms and/or oral dams to lower your risk.

If you are taking medications such as antibiotics or street drugs, verify with your health care provider before starting POP.

If you have any vomiting or diarrhea, continue to take POP, but use a backup method of birth control (condoms) for the rest of the cycle.

Call the **Sexual Health Infoline Ontario** at 1-800-668-2437 if you have questions or need help.

For more information on the birth control pill, please consult [www.sexandu.ca](http://www.sexandu.ca)

### Sexual Health Centre

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