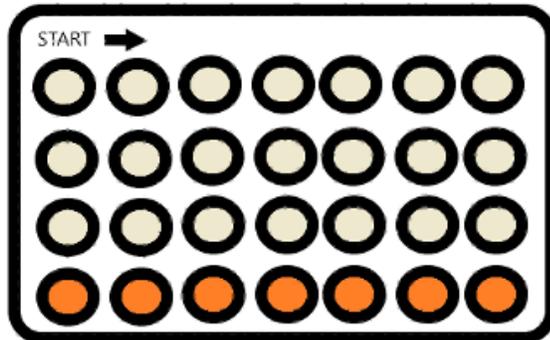




## How to Take Hormonal Contraceptive Pills

### How to Start Taking Pills (3 Options)

- **Option 1: Start today**
  - Take the first pill in the pack TODAY
  - Take one pill every day at the same time
  - Take the pills in order and do not skip any pills
  - Do not have sex and/or use condoms for the first 7 days of the pill pack
- **Option 2: Start the pills when your period starts**
  - Take the first pill on the first day of your next period
  - If you take the first pill on the first day of your next period, the pills will work for contraception right away
  - Take one pill every day at the same time
  - Take the pills in order and do not skip any pills
- **Option 3: Start the pills on the Sunday after your period starts**
  - Take the first pill on the first Sunday after your period starts, even if you are still bleeding
  - Take one pill every day at the same time
  - Take the pills in order and do not skip any pills



**FYI:** Your pill pack might have 7 inactive pills like in this picture, or 4, or may look like something else - ask your doctor if you have questions.

**Tip:** Many teens take the pills after dinner, as lots of kids sleep later on weekend days! Try setting an alarm to help!

### What to do if You Miss Pills

- If you take 1 pill late (LESS than 24 hours after you were supposed to take it)
  - Take the missed pill right away
  - Continue taking one pill every day at the usual time, even if that means you take 2 pills on the same day
  - Use condoms or do not have sex for 7 days
- If you miss 2 pills in a row:
  - Take both missed pills immediately
  - The next day, take the next TWO pills at your usual time
  - Continue taking one pill every day at the usual time after that
  - Use condoms or do not have sex for 7 days
  - If you missed 2 pills in the FIRST ROW AND have had sex without a condom in the last 5 days, consider using emergency birth control
- If you miss 3 or more pills in a row:
  - Throw away your pill pack
  - Start a new pack now
  - Take one pill every day at the same time
  - Use condoms or do not have sex for 7 days

**What kind of side effects might happen? Side effects are usually mild, like headaches, nausea, breast tenderness, mood, or appetite changes. Often, these side effects get better over time. Estrogen slightly increases your risk of developing a blood clot.**

**Talk to your healthcare provider to understand more about these side effects and how they apply to you.**

***Tip: If you miss pills or take pills late, you may have bleeding and/or pain that you were not expecting, and if you are using them for contraception, you could get pregnant***

This document was created and approved by the NASPAG Education Committee, February 2025