Mini Pill (Progestin-Only) Information Sheet

How It Works
The pill contains only the progestin hormone, no estrogen. It protects against pregnancy by preventing ovulation (the ripening and release of an egg from the ovary), changing the cervical mucus to deter movement of sperm, and thinning the lining of the uterus.

Instructions For Use
Each pack has 28 pills, all with the same amount of progestin. There are a few different ways to begin taking your birth control pills. Our staff will discuss with you the best way to begin your pills at your scheduled appointment. However and whenever you start taking your pills, *it is important to take 1 pill at the same time every day*. It is also important to use a back up method of contraception (condoms) for a month after starting a new form of birth control for adequate pregnancy prevention.

What To Do If You Take A Pill Late
If you miss a pill, take it as soon as you remember it and take your next pill at the regular time. It is important to use a back up method of contraception for the next 7 days (if you miss a pill during this time, you must use the back up method until you have successfully taken your pills as directed for 7 days in a row). If you miss more than 1 pill in a row, please notify our office for further instructions. *Please be aware that pill effectiveness decreases if you miss a pill or take a pill late.*

Effectiveness
The progestin-only pill is around 96%-97% effective. It is important to keep in mind that no method is 100% effective, using the pills consistently and correctly keep effectiveness high and reduce chances of pregnancy. Pregnancy rates tend to be the highest within the first 6 months of starting the pill. To ensure effectiveness, you are encouraged to use additional protection for the first 2 months of beginning your pills. It is important to use additional protection at the following times as effectiveness can decrease at these times: use of antacids or antibiotics, severe diarrhea, vomiting within 2 hours of taking a pill, or taking any pills late or missing any pills.

Bleeding Patterns On The Mini-Pill
While taking the progestin-only pill, you may have regular or irregular periods. Unlike the combined oral contraceptive pill which regulates menstruation, the mini-pill may disrupt normal bleeding patterns. There is absolutely no way to predict what your bleeding pattern or tendency may be. Again, it is important to continue to take 1 pill every day, at the same time every day.

Benefits
1. No estrogen. The progestin-only pill can actually diminish the possibility of certain side effects such as elevated blood pressure, nausea, headaches, and breast tenderness that can be experienced with the combined pills. The mini-pill also reduces the risk of other serious side effects associated with estrogen.
2. Light or non-existent periods.
3. Decreased anemia.
4. Decreased menstrual cramps and discomfort.
5. Decreased risk of endometrial and ovarian cancer, and pelvic inflammatory disease (PID).

Who Should Use The Mini-Pill
Because the mini-pill has no estrogen, it is a great alternative for some females. These people should use the mini-pill: breastfeeding women, women age 35 and over who smoke, those with migraine headaches, hypertension, or anyone else who can’t have estrogen for other health reasons.

Minor Side Effects
- Irregular periods
- Weight gain
- Moodiness or depression
- Sex drive changes

Major Side Effects
- Blood clots in legs, lungs, or brain (stroke)
- Heart attack

Seek immediate medical attention if you have any of the following symptoms:
A – Abdominal pain, severe in nature
C – Chest pain or shortness of breath
H – Headaches, severe in nature
E – Eye problems, blurring, loss of vision, or flashing lights
S – Swelling or pain in the leg, calf or thigh

You are at an increased risk of experiencing the above if you:
- Have diagnosed high blood pressure
- Are 35 or older
- Have diabetes
- Have high cholesterol
- Have migraine headaches
- Smoke cigarettes

Discontinuing The Mini-Pill
When you are ready to no longer prevent pregnancy, you can easily stop taking the pill. You may experience some withdrawal bleeding, but your regular period should return within a few months. If you are planning pregnancy, it is recommended you use a barrier form of birth control until you have a regular period.

* Final Note: Birth control pills provide no protection from Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). If you are intimate with more than one long-term partner, it is important to ALWAYS use a condom, male or female, to reduce your risk of being exposed to a STI.