

ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES (“The Pill”)

Effectiveness (chances of NOT getting pregnant)

- 95% - 99% chance of not getting pregnant.
- Between 1-5 per 100 women may become pregnant with proper use.

What is the Pill?

- Synthetic hormones (progesterone and/or estrogen) like those produced by the body to
- regulate the menstrual cycle.
- Pregnancy is prevented because the pill stops ovulation and/or thickens the cervical mucus by stopping sperm from passing through.
- Reversible method of birth control given only by prescription.

Advantages of the Pill

- Doesn't interfere with sex.
- Regulates the menstrual cycle.
- Reduces menstrual flow and cramping.
- Decreases acne outbreaks.
- Reduces the risk of ovarian and endometrial cancer.
- Most popular method used.

Disadvantages of the Pill

- Must be taken every day at the same time each day.
- Increased risk of heart attack, stroke, or blood clots (in lungs, legs, or arms), especially if you smoke more than 10 cigarettes a day, or are over 35 and smoke.
- Possible mood swings or depression.
- May decrease sexual desire.
- Can not be used if you are 35 or older and smoke.
- Does not prevent sexually transmitted diseases (see warning below).

How Do I Decide?

- Can you remember to take a pill every day?
- Do you have sex frequently or not very often? If not very often, do you want to take a pill every day?
- Are there some medical problems that prevent you from taking the pill? Do you have liver disease, breast cancer and/or blood clots in lungs, legs, or arms?
- Does this method fit with your religious or moral beliefs?
- Is the pill the best method for you?

Do you want to discuss this method with your clinician, family planning clinic staff, husband, partner, friend, or family member? In the Philadelphia area, [click here](#) for a list of local family planning clinics. Outside of Philadelphia, please [click here](#) for a clinic near you www.plannedparenthood.org.

REMINDER: This method does not provide any protection against sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) including HIV and Hepatitis B. Using a condom consistently can help to protect you from STD's.