
PILL REVISIT

When you first begin birth control pills, your Pat Walker Health Center provider may give you a prescription for three months. When you begin your third pack of pills call your provider for an appointment.

PHARMACY HOURS

Monday – Friday
8am – 5pm

When leaving for summer, weekends, or vacations, make sure you purchase enough pills.

SOME GOOD NEWS

Many birth control pill users experience good side effects: lighter, shorter and less painful periods, more regular cycles, and less acne, to name a few. Large well-controlled studies document that birth control pill users are at less risk for ovarian cysts, ovarian cancer and uterine cancer.

If you have any questions regarding symptoms or a birth control method, please feel free to call or schedule an appointment.

For more information or an appointment, call

Women's Clinic
575-4478

or

Primary Medical Clinic
575-4451

Mission Statement

The Pat Walker Health Center, University Health Services provides professional and comprehensive medical care, mental health care, health education, and health promotion for a diverse community of students, faculty, and staff. We, the University Health Services Staff of the Pat Walker Health Center, have a commitment to physical, mental, spiritual, social, and emotional health, the highest standards of quality, and appreciation of the value of each individual. Through these endeavors we support the educational mission of the University of Arkansas and the growth of each individual.

Pat Walker Health Center University Health Services

525 N. Garland Avenue
Fayetteville, AR 72701

(479) 575-4451
TTY (479) 575-4124

Website: health.uark.edu



Accredited by
**Accreditation Association
for Ambulatory Health Care**

*A Member of
the Division of Student Affairs*



STARTING BIRTH CONTROL PILLS



Women's Clinic

(479) 575-4478

525 N. Garland Avenue
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Primary Medical Clinic

(479) 575-4451

TTY (479) 575-4124

Website: health.uark.edu



Your health practitioner has prescribed birth control pills for you. They are a medication and should be listed as such when you are asked to list your medications. **Save** one package insert, which comes with your pills, so that you can refer to it if the need arises.

HOW TO START YOUR PILLS

There are several ways to start your pills. Regardless of the start method you choose, **the most effective way is to take your pill at the same time every day.** Most women find that taking their pill along with something they already do regularly everyday helps. Some women are also using the alarm function on their cell phone as a daily reminder.

1. **Sunday Start.** Start the first pill of your pack on the first Sunday following the **first day** of your menstrual period. For example, if your period began on Tuesday, start your pills the following Sunday. If your period begins on Sunday, start your pills the same day. Use extra protection (condoms) for at least two weeks. You will have 28 pills to take. When you finish a pack of pills, start a new pack the next day regardless if you are still having a period or not.
2. **Same Day Start. Begin your pills on the very first day of your menstrual period.** No extra protection is needed if you are absolutely sure this is a normal period.
3. In consultation with your healthcare provider, start on _____.

SIDE EFFECTS

The more common nuisance side effects include:

- **Nausea**
Take pills with food or in the evening before bedtime with food.

- **Spotting or breakthrough bleeding**
Taking your pills at the same time and not missing any pills can lessen this side effect. Still in the first three month adjustment period you may spot or have light to heavy bleeding at any time during the month.
- **Breast tenderness**
Reduce caffeine and salt intake. Usually it goes away within several weeks. If it persists or you find a lump make an appointment with your provider.
- **Mood changes**
Some women may notice a change in their moods. If this does not improve after three months or significantly affects your daily living, consult your provider.
- **Weight gain**
Studies have shown no difference in weight gain between young women on birth control and those who do not take it. Some women retain 1-2 pounds of water on pills.

If you are concerned about a side effect or have questions call your provider before stopping your birth control.

WHAT SHOULD I LOOK FOR

Serious side effects are rare on the pill. However, there are some specific things you should watch for. Women on birth control are slightly more prone to **blood clots**. A blood clot can occur in a vein or artery and can have different symptoms depending on where it forms. It can form anywhere but is most common in the lower extremities. Clots are most likely to occur in women over 35, smokers, and/or women with a genetic tendency. Smoking and birth control are not a good combination.

The warning signs of serious side effects are: abdominal pain, chest pain, shortness of breath, severe new headaches combined with persistent dizziness, difficulty speaking, and fainting. Eye

problems, leg pain with numbness, redness, or swelling should also be reported. High blood pressure, liver tumors, and gall bladder disease are other rare but possible risks.

Women with a family history of breast cancer should review their options carefully with their provider.

READ YOUR PACKAGE INSERT CAREFULLY

IF YOU FORGET TO TAKE YOUR PILL...

1. **Carefully consult your package insert section regarding what to do if you missed any pills.**
2. If you are in any doubt regarding protection due to missed pills, use a back-up method or abstain until after your next period. When you start a new pack of pills after having missed pills in the previous cycle, use extra protection for seven days of that new pack.
3. Know that just making up pills may not provide you with full protection and you could get pregnant.
4. Missing pills frequently should alert you to consider other methods of birth control.
5. If you missed pills, you may want to consider emergency contraception (aka. The Morning After Pill).

Additional backup, such as condoms, with the pill is always recommended but especially important...

1. When first starting pills.
2. To prevent exposure to sexually transmitted infections.
3. When pills are missed.
4. If another medication could interfere with your birth control. Consult your health care provider regarding use of other medications.

