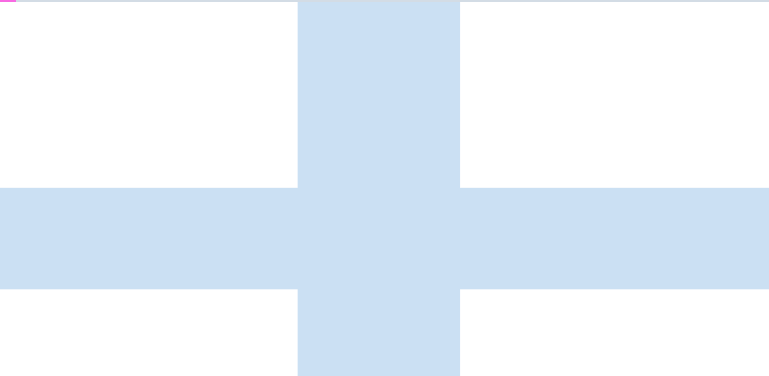


THE
WELL
WOMAN
CENTRE

Mini Pill



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PROGESTERONE-ONLY PILLS

(Mini-pills)

There is one progesterone only pill (POP) currently licensed for use in Ireland. It is called Noriday. From September 2009 another pill will become available – Cerazette.

At the Well Woman Centre we have been prescribing Cerazette since 2007 for two main reasons: it is more effective for contraception than Noriday and it needs to be taken within twelve hours of the same time every day whereas Noriday needs to be taken within three hours of the same time every day.

INFORMATION ON NORIDAY

Noriday contains a progestogen called norethisterone.

How effective is it?

When used very carefully, it is 95-99% effective. It is more effective in older women (30+) and women who are breastfeeding, as both are generally less fertile.

How does it work?

It thickens the mucus at the cervix (entrance to the womb), making it hard for the sperm to travel through. It also alters the lining of the womb to prevent implantation of an egg. Very occasionally it can stop ovulation (the release of an egg each month).

Who is it suitable for?

The progestogen-only pill is often recommended for women who want to take a contraceptive pill but should not take oestrogen and therefore cannot take the combined pill. This may be especially useful for smokers over 35, breastfeeding women and women with diabetes or hypertension.

Side effects

Most women will experience some side effects when they start taking the pill. Common side effects include headaches, breast tenderness, mood swings, bloating, nausea and leg cramps. Decreased sex drive and acne can also occur.

How do I take it?

Take the first pill on the first day of your period and then one every day until you finish the pack. The following day go directly into another pack – do not take a break.

For the progestogen-only pill to be effective, you must take it at the same time every day. Find a time which suits you and make a habit of taking your pill then. The pill is at its maximum efficiency a few hours after it is taken, so for many women early in the evening may be a good time.

When is it safe to have sex?

If you take your first pill on the first day of your period you need to use protection for the first seven days. You can start up to day 5 of your cycle and you will be safe after the first seven days of pill taking. If you start later in your cycle you may not be covered for contraception. Consult the instruction leaflet but if you are still unsure, then contact your doctor.

What if I forget to take a pill?

It depends how late you are in taking your pill. If you are less than three hours late, don't worry, just take the delayed pill now and further pills as usual.

If you are more than three hours late taking your pill, take the most recently missed pill immediately. Leave any earlier missed pills in your pack. Take your further pills as usual. Use extra precautions (a condom, for instance) for the next seven days. If intercourse has taken place since missing the pill you may wish to take a morning after pill.

Are there any problems?

If you vomit or have diarrhoea, you may not be protected. Continue taking your pills as usual and use another form of contraception until 7 days after the vomiting / diarrhoea has stopped. Certain medication interferes with progestogen-only pills. If you are taking any medication, check with us at The Well Woman Centre, or with your family doctor. Your periods may stop or you may experience irregular bleeding.

What if I miss a period?

With the progestogen-only pill your periods may be irregular, and you may have some bleeding between periods. Make a note of any changes so that you can discuss them with a doctor or nurse. If you have taken all your pills correctly, but you miss a period, it is unlikely that you are pregnant. Continue as normal, but if your period is more than two weeks late, consult us at The Well Woman Centre.

If you have any sudden lower stomach pain as well as a light or delayed period, see your doctor immediately.

Do I need check-ups?

Yes. Your second visit will be about three months after starting the pill, and then every six months after that.

INFORMATION ON CERAZETTE

Cerazette contains a progestogen called levonorgestrel.

How effective is it?

When used carefully, it is 99% + effective. It is as effective as pills that contain oestrogen and progesterone. It can be used in any age group.

How does it work?

It stops ovulation.

Who is it suitable for?

The progestogen-only pill is often recommended for women who want to take a contraceptive pill but should not take oestrogen and therefore cannot take the combined pill. This may be especially useful for smokers over 35, migraine sufferers, breastfeeding women and women with diabetes or hypertension.

Side effects

Most women will experience some side effects when they start taking the pill. Common side effects include headaches, breast tenderness, mood swings, bloating, nausea and leg cramps. Decreased sex drive and acne can also occur.

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What if I forget to take a pill?

It depends how late you are in taking your pill. If you are less than three hours late, don't worry, just take the delayed pill now and further pills as usual.

If you are more than twelve hours late taking your pill, take the most recently missed pill immediately. Leave any earlier missed pills in your pack. Take your further pills as usual. Use extra precautions (a condom, for instance) for the next seven days. If intercourse has taken place since missing the pill you may wish to take a morning after pill.

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