Birth Control Pills

How:

Birth control pills have hormones that prevent pregnancy by stopping the release of an egg. When you stop taking the pill, you could get pregnant right away.

When:

You must take a birth control pill at the same time of day every day.

Where:

You can get a prescription for birth control pills from your healthcare provider.

Advantages:

Birth control pills are easy to use. They work very well if they are used the right way. Periods may be more regular, lighter and less painful. It can help women be at lower risk for some cancers. The pill can help clear up acne.

Disadvantages:

Birth control pills must be taken every day at about the same time of day to work well. Some may find it hard to remember to take the pill or to take it at the same time of day.

Side Effects:

Some women have sore breasts, headaches, nausea, bleeding between periods or mood changes such as depression or irritability.

Risks:

You should not use birth control pills if you are pregnant or:

- Have breast cancer now.
- Have ever had a heart attack, stroke, or a blood clot or clotting problems.
- Have certain liver diseases or liver tumors.
- Have a certain kind of migraine headache.
- Have high blood pressure.
- Have some heart conditions.
- Smoke 15 or more cigarettes a day and are 35 or older.
- Have ever had a complex organ transplant.

Effectiveness:

Less than 1 out of 100 women will get pregnant each year if they always take the pill each day as directed.

About 9 out of 100 women will get pregnant each year if they don't always take the pill each day as directed.

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