

HOW TO TAKE YOUR COMBINED* ORAL CONTRACEPTIVE PILL.

W.H.O. recommendations

21st century prescribing – Much less likely to have an unplanned pregnancy, reduces bleeding, less forgetting and more convenient!

Traditional Contraceptive Pill taking – **21/7** (21 days on, 7 days off)

New Options (Choose One)

- a) **21/4** = ONLY TAKE A FOUR DAY BREAK
Take all 21 days of your pill followed by a 4-day break and then start a new pack.
- b) **42/4** = RUN 2 FULL PACKS BACK TO BACK (21+21=42) - this is followed by a 4-day break, then repeat! (called Bi-cycling)
- c) **63/4** = Take 3 PACKS BACK TO BACK (21+21+21=63) - this is followed by a 4-day break, then repeat! (called tri-cycling)

Side effects like break through bleeding or spotting can sometimes occur when you run pill packs back to back. This is usually insignificant and will settle down once your body adjusts to your new pattern.

If the spotting/bleeding is bothering you, you can take your 4-day break to have a withdrawal bleed *whenever you like*, as long as you have not missed any pills in the preceding week. Then continue taking your next pill pack back to back after your 4-day break.

HOWEVER if you have spotting and have missed a pill (or have a new sexual partner) you should see your doctor to check for STI's and rule out pregnancy .

Handy Hints

- USE THE **MY PILL APP ON YOUR PHONE** –set it to whichever regime suits you best personally
- ALWAYS USE **CONDOMS WITH THE PILL FOR CONTRACPETION AND STI PREVENTION.**
- REMEMBER **LONG-ACTING METHODS OF CONTRACEPTION EXIST AND ARE MORE EFFECTIVE – DISCUSS WITH YOUR DOCTOR .**

*combined= oestrogen and progesterone

This is the unlicensed use of a licensed product (UULP) but it is safe and more effective.

You can discuss this with your doctor if you find the instructions confusing or difficult to understand.

Don't forget your smear if you are over 25!