



# How should I take my pill ?

## Here's what you need to know:

- ❖ There are now many safe ways you can take the combined pill or patch.
- ❖ This leaflet explains 4 options, so you can choose the one that works for you.
- ❖ These new methods mean taking shorter breaks and taking breaks less often, or never!

## What are the benefits?

- ❖ Your contraception may be more effective to prevent pregnancy.
- ❖ You can have less bleeding or no bleeding
- ❖ It can reduce side effects like headaches or period pain that some people get when they take breaks.
- ❖ It can make it easier to remember your pill on time

This leaflet only gives a summary. For detailed information on the combined pill or patch, including what to do about missed pills, please look at the information on: [www.sexwise.org.uk](http://www.sexwise.org.uk)

## Common Questions:

### ***Is it safe for me to not have 'periods'?***

Yes! Bleeding when you are using the pill is not a real period anyway, only a 'withdrawal bleed'. There is no benefit to having regular bleeds.

### ***Will this affect my fertility in the future?***

No. Taking the pill in any of these ways will not affect your fertility in the future. Everything will go back to normal after you stop the pill.

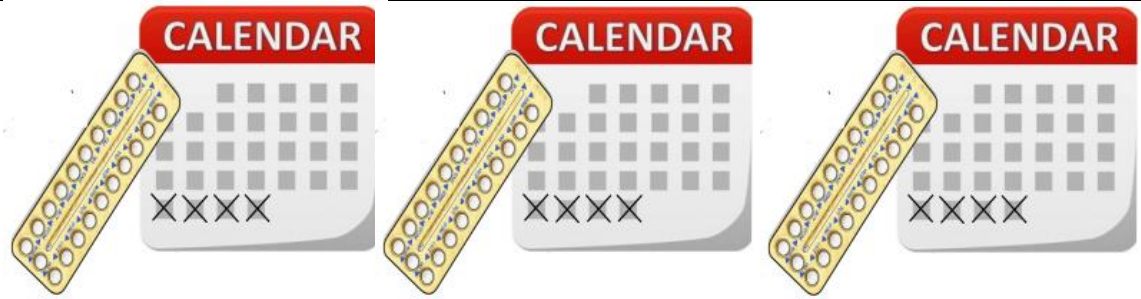
### ***What do I do if I have bleeding when I'm not expecting it, or irregular bleeding?***

This may be normal for some people when they take the pill in certain ways. However it's important to check there isn't another reason for the bleeding, for example an infection. Speak to your doctor or nurse about this. We may advise you to do a pregnancy test and a STI test. Do not stop the pill before speaking to a nurse, as you might get pregnant, even if you are bleeding.

Using the pill in the ways described in this leaflet is "off licence", meaning that the instructions are different from those recommended by the manufacturer. However, there is evidence that using these methods is safe and effective and the practice is supported by medical authorities in the UK.

## Monthly Breaks

- Take your pill for 3 weeks, then take 4 days break
- Most people have a light bleed during the break
- Start taking the pill again on the 5<sup>th</sup> day (even if you are still bleeding)



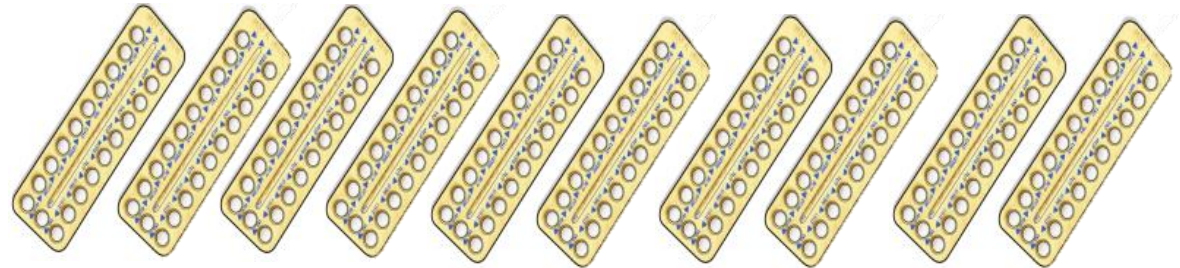
## Break every 3 months (Tricycling)

- Take your pill for 9 weeks, then take 4 days break
- Most people have a light bleed during the break
- Start taking the pill again on the 5<sup>th</sup> day (even if you are still bleeding)



## Never take a break!

- Take your pill every single day without taking a break
- Some people will not have any bleeding
- Some people will have some bleeding on and off which can be normal when you take the pill like this



## Only break if you're bleeding

- Take your pill every single day
- When you start bleeding, take a 4 day break
- Start taking the pill again on the 5<sup>th</sup> day (even if you are still bleeding)
- **Follow the GOLDEN RULE:**



★ When taking the pill, take for *at least 3 weeks* ★

★ When taking a break, take *only 4 days* break ★