

# Progestin-Only Pill (POP)

(Based on Managing Contraception Pocket Guide 2019-2020)

## Effectiveness:

- 99.7% with perfect use, 91.0% with typical use

Action: Progestin-only pills contain only one hormone and prevent pregnancy

## Advantages/Benefits:

- Good option for women who can't use estrogen but want to take pills
- May enhance sexual enjoyment due to diminished fear of pregnancy; facilitates spontaneity
- Nursing mothers can take these pills, usually after the baby is six weeks old
- Decreased period blood loss, cramps and pain.
- May be taken by women who have had blood clots
- May be taken by smokers over age 35 (However, all smokers should be encouraged to quit - ask your clinician about a smoking cessation program)
- Protection against abnormal thickening of lining of uterus and endometrial cancer
- Rapid return to baseline ability to become pregnant

## Disadvantages/Risks:

- Irregular menses (period) ranging from having no period to increased days of spotting and bleeding but with reduced blood loss overall
- Spotting and bleeding may interfere with sexual activity
- Possible increase in depression, anxiety, irritability
- Intermittent amenorrhea (no period) or concerns about pregnancy
- No protection from STDs or HIV. (If at risk use condoms)
- Must take pill at same time each day
- Taking medications that increase hepatic (liver) clearance, such as certain TB medicines, certain seizure medicines, St. John's Wort or griseofulvin
- Inability to absorb sex steroids (regulate sexual functions) from gastrointestinal tract (active colitis, etc.)

## Instructions:

- **Must take pill every day at the same time**, If you miss a pill by more than 3 hours of the usual time, take that pill and then use a back-up method (for example a condom) for 48 hours
- If you have had sex in the past 5 days and missed or was late taking any pills, consider using emergency contraception.

**FPEM-5**

Approved 7/1/2020