

Progestogen-only pill (POP or “Mini pill”)

The “Mini Pill” contains a very small amount of only one hormone, progestogen. It is more correctly called the progestogen-only pill (or POP). There are now two different types of POP available in Australia – the newer type contains a progestogen called drospirinone.

How does it work?

The POP stops pregnancy mainly by thickening the mucus at the cervix (opening to the uterus/womb) so that sperm cannot get through to meet an egg. The drospirinone POP also stops the ovary releasing an egg (ovulation) which the older POPs only stop sometimes. You need to take the POP every day.

How effective is it?

If the POP is taken correctly, it can be 99% effective in stopping pregnancy. The older POPs need to be taken within the same three-hour timeframe every day; the drospirinone POP within 24 hours. If you are late taking a pill or miss a pill you may not be protected from pregnancy. Vomiting, diarrhoea and certain medications also reduce effectiveness, meaning in real life the POP may only be 93% effective.

Will it work immediately?

If the POP is started within the first 5 days of the menstrual cycle (where day one is the first day of your period), or within the first 7 days after an abortion or miscarriage, then it will be effective immediately. If the POP is started at another time during your menstrual cycle, it will be effective in 48 hours (after you have taken 3 pills) for the older POP, and after 7 days for the drospirinone POP.

Another form of contraception (such as condoms) should be used during this time to avoid pregnancy. You should only start the POP in this way after talking with your doctor to make sure you may not already be pregnant.

How long will it last?

The POP will provide contraception only for as long as you continue to take it correctly – every day, at the same time. You can become pregnant within days of stopping the POP.

What are the side effects?

There are very few side effects with the POP. It is quite common to have spot bleeding between periods or irregular vaginal bleeding, or periods may completely stop in some people. Some people occasionally get headaches or sore/tender breasts, mood changes or changes to their skin, but this usually settles in a few weeks.

If the POP fails to prevent pregnancy, there is a slightly higher risk that the pregnancy may be ectopic (the pregnancy grows outside the uterus, such as in the tube). If you think you may be pregnant, contact us on **1300 003 707** or your doctor.

Who should not take the POP?

There are a few circumstances and medical conditions where you should not use the POP. You should inform your doctor if you:

- have or have had breast cancer
- have had a history of any unusual vaginal bleeding
- have disturbed liver function
- are taking any medications, especially for epilepsy.

Your doctor will help you decide whether the POP is the best contraceptive method for you.

What if I am breastfeeding?

The POP is safe in breastfeeding. It can be taken straight after you give birth, even if you are breastfeeding.

What if I forget a pill?

If you forget to take a POP or are late taking it:

- Take one pill as soon as possible
- Take the next pill at the usual time.

You will need to use condoms or not have sex for the next 48 hours (older POP) or 7 days (drospirinone POP).

What else should I consider?

If you have diarrhoea or vomit within 2 hours after taking a pill continue taking the POP as normal, but follow the rules for missed pills (see above).

The POP offers no protection against Sexually Transmitted Infections or HIV.

Where can I get the Mini Pill?

You need a doctor's prescription to get the POP. You can get a prescription from one of our centres, your local doctor or a family planning centre.



Call 1300 003 707

Visit msiaustralia.org.au

Scan the QR code to read this information sheet online.

