

POP

Progesterone-Only Pill

The POP is an oral contraceptive pill containing a low dose progesterone. It is taken every day to prevent pregnancy. Sometimes called the mini pill, the POP releases progesterone, a hormone which is naturally produced by the body.



Street names	Mini pill
Medical names	Progestogen Only Pill, POP
Effectiveness	91%
It lasts	One day
Fertility	No contraceptive effect if tablet is not taken
Who can use it?	Females of any age from menarche to menopause
Hormones	Contains progestogen hormones
Visibility	Discreet but you need to store the packets
STIs	No protection
Side effects	Allow 6 months to adjust to hormones
Cost	Between \$6 - \$40 depending on whether you have a healthcare card
Where to get it	It is available from True clinics and General Practitioners (GPs)

How does it work?

- The main effect is to thicken the mucus of the cervix so that sperm cannot enter the uterus (womb).
- Changes the lining of the uterus, making it unsuitable for pregnancy

What are the advantages of the POP as a method of contraception?

- Contains a very low dose of hormone
- Reversible and rapid return to usual fertility
- Side effects are rare
- Can be taken by women who are unable to take the combined contraceptive pill because of health problems or side effects with oestrogen.

What are the disadvantages of the POP as a method of contraception?

- It must be taken at the same time every day to be effective
- In younger women, it may be less effective than other hormonal methods
- Unpredictable bleeding pattern (see side effects)

POP does not protect against STIs

To make sure you are protected against pregnancy and STIs use the POP plus a condom for every sexual encounter.

Possible side effects

Side effects are uncommon but may include:

- Menstrual irregularities, which are common in POP users and represent the most frequent cause for contraceptive discontinuation
- Follicular ovarian cysts – usually there are no symptoms and do not require treatment.

Is the POP suitable for all women?

Most women can safely use the POP. The POP may be PARTICULARLY SUITABLE for women who:

- Cannot take oestrogen
- Are breast feeding
- Are over 35 and smoke
- Prefer an oral method of progestogen contraception

Who cannot take the POP?

Women who have:

- Severe liver disease
- Severe arterial disease
- Malabsorption syndrome
- Breast cancer
- Irregular vaginal bleeding which has not been investigated.

What do I need to know about starting the POP?

Starting the POP for the first time requires an assessment by a doctor and a prescription.

What do I need to know about the ongoing use of the POP?

All pills in a POP packet are active pills. There is no pill-free break or non-hormonal pills. The pill should be taken at the same time every day or within 3 hours of that time.

To renew your POP prescription you will need to see a doctor for review at least once a year.

A back-up contraceptive (e.g. condoms) should be used for at least two days if the POP is taken more than three hours late or forgotten on any given day. Consider Emergency Contraception if unprotected intercourse occurs.

The POP is available from True clinics as well as gynaecologists and some GPs.

To make an appointment at a True clinic, visit our website for contact details of a clinic near you.

www.true.org.au

Missed a Progestogen-only (POP) Pill?

How late are you?

