

Oral Contraceptive Pills (Estrogen and Progestin Oral Contraceptives) (Ortho Tri-Cyclen, Yasmin, Yaz)

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For questions or an appointment, call (806)797-1202

Warning: Cigarette smoking increases the risk of serious side effects from oral contraceptives, including heart attacks, blood clots, and strokes. This risk is higher for women over 35 years old and heavy smokers (15 or more cigarettes per day). If you take oral contraceptives, **you should not smoke.**

Do not take oral contraceptives if you are **pregnant, plan to become pregnant,** or are breast-feeding. If you become pregnant while taking oral contraceptives, call your doctor immediately.

How to take: take by mouth once a day, every day or almost every day of a regular cycle. To avoid nausea, take oral contraceptives with food or milk. Take your oral contraceptive at the same time every day.

*Oral contraceptives are usually started on the first or fifth day of your menstrual period or **on the first Sunday after or on which bleeding begins.**

*Oral contraceptives come in many different brands. Different brands of oral contraceptives contain slightly different medications or doses, are taken in slightly different ways, and have different risks and benefits.

*If you have a 21-tablet packet, take one tablet daily for 21 days and then none for 7 days. Then start a new packet.

*If you have a 28-tablet packet, take one tablet daily for 28 days. The last set of tablets in most 28 day packets are a different color. These tablets are reminder tablets. They do not contain any active ingredients but may contain iron. Taking one of these tablets every day will help you remember to start your next packet of birth control pills on time. One type of 28-tablet packet contains tablets that are all the same color. All of the tablets in this type of packet contain active ingredients. Whether your packet includes reminder tablets or only active tablets, you should take one tablet daily continuously for 28 days in the order specified in your packet. Start a new packet the day after you take your 28th tablet.

What to expect: You will probably experience withdrawal bleeding similar to a menstrual period while you are taking the inactive tablets or the low dose estrogen tablets or during the week that you do not take your oral contraceptive. If you are taking the type of packet that only contains active tablets, you will not experience any scheduled bleeding, but you may experience unexpected bleeding and spotting, especially at the beginning of your treatment. Be sure to start taking your new packet on schedule even if you are still bleeding.

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When not to take OCP:

Tell your doctor if you have or have ever had **blood clots in your legs, lungs, or eyes**; **thrombophilia** (condition in which the blood clots easily); **coronary artery disease** (clogged blood vessels leading to the heart); cerebrovascular disease (clogging or weakening of the blood vessels within the brain or leading to the brain); **stroke or mini-stroke**; an irregular heartbeat; **heart disease**; a heart attack; chest pain; diabetes that has affected your circulation; headaches that come along with other symptoms such as vision changes, weakness, and dizziness; high blood pressure; **breast cancer**; cancer of the lining of the uterus, cervix, or vagina; liver cancer, liver tumors, or other types of **liver disease**; yellowing of the skin or eyes during pregnancy or while you were using hormonal contraceptives (birth control pills, patches, rings, implants, or injections); unexplained abnormal vaginal bleeding; **adrenal insufficiency** (condition in which the body does not produce enough of certain natural substances needed for important functions such as blood pressure); or **kidney disease**. Also tell your doctor if you have recently had surgery or have been unable to move around for any reason.

Adverse Events: Any medication can cause adverse reactions. If you develop any unusual symptoms including the ones below – call the doctor:

- *severe **headache, vomiting**
- *dizziness or faintness
- *coughing up blood
- *partial or complete **loss of vision**
- *severe stomach pain
- *yellowing of the skin or eyes
- *loss of appetite
- *fever
- ***pain, warmth, or heaviness in the back of the lower leg**
- ***menstrual bleeding that is unusually heavy** or that lasts for longer than 7 days in a row
- ***depression**, especially if you also have trouble sleeping, tiredness, loss of energy, or other mood changes
- *speech problems
- *weakness or numbness of an arm or leg
- *shortness of breath
- *double vision, bulging eyes
- *crushing chest pain or chest heaviness
- *dark-colored urine, light-colored stool
- *extreme tiredness, weakness, or lack of energy
- *swelling of the hands, feet, ankles or lower legs

Oral contraceptives may increase the chance that you will develop **liver tumors**. These tumors are not a form of cancer, but they can break and cause serious bleeding inside the body. Oral contraceptives may also increase the chance that you will develop **breast or liver cancer, or have a heart attack, a stroke, or a serious blood clot**. Talk to your doctor about the risks of using oral contraceptives.

NOTE: This is not a comprehensive information sheet. If you desire complete drug information, contact the pharmacist or refer to the “package insert”.