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No-Period Pills: Are They Safe?

You can go three months - maybe longer - without a period if you take combination birth control pills, which contain the hormones estrogen and progesterone. Many of the women I see wonder how that works and whether it's safe. Here's the story.

Pills marketed for continuous use

Three brands of birth control pills - Seasonique, Seasonale and Lybrel - have FDA approval for continuous use. This means they suppress your period completely because every pill in a pack contains hormones. If you take Seasonique or Seasonale, you'll have no period for three months. If you take Lybrel, you can go without a period for as long as you want.

What about your regular pill?

If you'd like to try the no-period route and you're taking a combination pill other than one of the brands mentioned above, you may not have to switch brands. The pill you're already taking may cost less as well.

Standard birth control pills come in 28-day packs containing 21 active pills and seven inactive ("sugar" or placebo) pills. On day 22 of each month, you switch from active to inactive pills. Shortly after that, you experience vaginal bleeding much like a period. You take your last inactive pill on day 28, then start a new pack.

Stopping your period works best with monophasic pills, which have the same dose of hormones in every active pill. Try this technique:

Take the first three weeks of a new pack of pills as usual. On the first day of the fourth week, start a new pack of pills, skipping all the inactive pills in the first pack. When you reach the inactive pills in your second pack, skip them, too, and start a third pack. Again, take the first 21 pills and skip to your fourth pack. Do not skip the inactive pills in your fourth pack. Take every pill in that pack, including the sugar pills, so you'll have a period. What can go wrong?

Many women complain of breakthrough bleeding or spotting when they are continuously taking active pills.

To solve that problem, try taking your traditional pills until you have spotting. Once you start to spot, switch to inactive pills for four days or seven days, whichever is your normal routine. With time, you may find that you can go longer and longer before you spot.

Will it affect your fertility?

No. Whether you take inactive pills for four or seven days out of 28 days, four or seven days out of 84 days, or continuously with no inactive pills, birth control pills simply put your fertility on hold. They do not reduce your ability to have a baby.

The important issue is to take your pills correctly to avoid pregnancy.

Birth control pills do not protect you from STDs. Unless you're in a stable, long-term relationship with someone you trust absolutely, you still need to use condoms. Before having sex with a new partner, you should both get tested to make sure you're free of STDs. Free [Medical Advice](#) published By [Dr Vivienne Balonwu](#).

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