



## Short-acting hormonal contraceptive choices

These contraceptive choices have a user failure rate if forgotten – you must remember to take them

	Description	Typical failure rates	Advantages	Disadvantages	Approximate initial costs
<b>Combined pill</b> 	<p>A pill containing oestrogen and progestogen, taken daily.</p> <p>Stops ovaries releasing an egg.</p>	<p><b>First year:</b> 8% (perfect use 0.1%).</p> <p><b>Long-term:</b> 1 – 8 % depending on how well the instructions are followed.</p>	<p>Often reduces bleeding and period pain.</p> <p>Can be used until menopause if fit and healthy.</p>	<p>Need to remember to take it.</p> <p>Diarrhoea, vomiting and other medications can reduce the effectiveness of this pill.</p> <p>Some women experience hormonal side effects like breast tenderness or nausea.</p> <p>There are several medical problems with which it is not possible to use this contraceptive.</p>	<p>Most are fully subsidised (normal pharmacy charges apply) but there may be an additional prescription part charge for some brands.</p>
<b>Progestogen-only pill</b> 	<p>A pill containing a small amount of progestogen taken daily.</p> <p>Thickens cervical mucus and/or stops ovaries releasing an egg.</p>	<p><b>First year:</b> 8% (perfect use 0.5%).</p> <p><b>Long-term:</b> 1 – 8 % depending on how well the instructions are followed.</p>	<p>Unlike the combined pill, very few medical problems prevent the use of a progestogen only pill.</p>	<p>Need to remember to take it.</p> <p>Diarrhoea, vomiting and other medications can reduce the effectiveness of this pill.</p> <p>Some women experience hormonal side effects.</p> <p>May have irregular bleeding or no periods.</p>	<p>Most are fully subsidised (normal pharmacy charges apply) but there may be an additional prescription part charge for some brands.</p>

Written by HealthInfo clinical advisers. Last reviewed May 2022.