

Tricycling the Contraceptive pill

This leaflet should be read together with the latest FPA Leaflet "Your guide to the Combined pill"

(which has information on side effects of the pill) available to download from sexwise.fpa.org

However, please ignore the direction to stop the pill every 21 days for 7 days

What is tricycling pill taking?

Tricycling means continuing to take your pills every day in a row (WITHOUT the regular pill free 7 day break), or "back to back" with no break until you've finished the box. When you have taken all of the pills in the box, take a 4 day break, before restarting the next box.

This means you would have a bleed every 3 months (rather than every month). There is a lot of evidence that tricycling makes your pill much more reliable and national guidance supports this. We have known for some time that the break of 7 days when not taking the pill weakens the pill's main effect of stopping your ovaries from releasing an egg.

It makes egg-release more likely when pills are missed which can then result in pregnancy. The added benefit of Tricycling the pill is it will reduce the number of bleeds you have as there are less breaks in pill taking.

The instruction leaflet in the box with your contraceptives will usually suggest taking pills in the usual licensed way of 21 days followed by a 7-day break, but national medical advice says it is just as safe to choose tricycling. This is an "off-licence" prescription because the pharmaceutical companies that make the pill have not applied for a licence for using the tricycling method as this is an expensive and time-consuming process.

What is an "off licence" prescription?

All medicines have a product licence. The licence tells us under which conditions the medicine can be prescribed for patients. If expert medical opinion is that a medicine can be used in different ways or under different conditions, this is called prescribing "off-licence".

You may choose whether you prefer to take your pills in the usual licensed pattern, or the tricycling method.

We usually recommend a 20 to 30 microgram oestrogen pill for tricycling - your healthcare provider will be able to tell you about this.

What are the benefits of tricycling pills for me?

- It makes the pill more reliable as a contraceptive
- It may reduce problems such as period pain, PMT (pre-menstrual tension), migraine and other headaches
- It's convenient if you want to avoid monthly bleeding

How do I tricycle my pills?

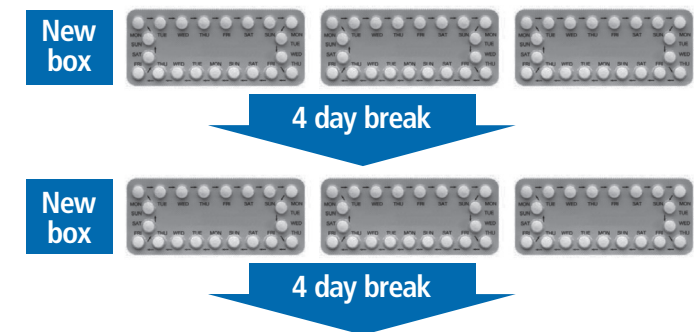
Take one pill at the same time of the day, at a time that is easy for you to remember.

Each box contains 3 strips of pills. Take all the pills in a strip and then start the next strip straightaway without a break.

Keep taking the strips without a break, until you have finished all the strips in the box (three strips in total).

After completing all 3 strips of pills in a box, take a **4 day break**, during which time a bleed is likely to occur, before restarting your pills again.

Restart the pill after 4 days even if you are still bleeding.



Sexual Health

patientinformation

How long can I tricycle my pills for?

For as long as you like - until either you choose another contraceptive method, or your clinic advises you to stop.

Isn't it better for me to have "periods" every month?

"Periods" are not needed. Women do not need to bleed every month to know that they are not pregnant or for any other health benefit. The womb lining does not build up because the pill keeps the lining of the womb thin. The "period" on the pill is completely artificial and is just your womb's response to stopping the pill (and therefore the hormones) for a few days. Tricycling stops you having that completely unnecessary monthly bleed.

What happens if I get bleeding while tricycling my pills?

Irregular bleeding and/or 'spotting' during the first months of tricycling pill-taking can occur, but most women find this becomes acceptable and it often lessens over time. If the bleeding is troublesome for you and continues for more than a few days, or does not settle, seek medical attention.

How often should I come back for follow up?

Once you are settled on the pill you usually only need a yearly check for any changes to your medical history, family history, drug history or allergies. You will also have your blood pressure and weight checked yearly.

If at any other time you have a question, or problem, or want to switch methods, make an appointment with your clinic for review.

Useful contacts

For further information on our clinic visit:

The Department of Integrated Sexual Health

Rotherham Hospital
Moorgate Road
Rotherham
S60 2UD
Telephone: 01709 427777

Useful websites

www.therotherhamft.nhs.uk/sexualhealth
www.fpa.org.uk
www.nhs.uk
www.gov.uk
www.patient.co.uk

We value your comments

If you have any comments or concerns about the services we have provided please let us know, or alternatively you can contact the team below

✉ Patient Experience Team

The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust

Rotherham Hospital, Moorgate Road,
Oakwood, Rotherham, S60 2UD
☎ 01709 424461

Monday to Friday, 9.00am until 5.00pm

Email your.experience@nhs.net

Bring your medicines when you come into hospital

Prescription medicines • Medicines you have bought
Alternative & herbal medicines • Inhalers



If you require this document in another language, large print, braille, audio or easyread format, please ask our healthcare providers*

*Note to healthcare providers:

Translated / easyread healthcare information can be sourced via the **Easyread websites** listed below or via contacting our translation service which can be accessed through the Hub.

Easyread websites

www.easyhealth.org.uk
www.friendlyresources.org.uk
www.easy-read-online.co.uk

Slovak

Ak vy alebo niekto koho poznáte potrebuje pomoc pri pochopení alebo čítaní tohto dokumentu, prosím kontaktujte nás na vyššie uvedenom čísle alebo nám pošlite e-mail.

Kurdish Sorani

کوردی سۆرانی
نەگەر تۆ یان کەسێک که تۆ دەبناسی پێویستی بەیارمەتی هەیەیت بۆ ئەوەی لەم بەلگەنامە بە تێبگات یان بێخوینتەوه، تکایە پەیوەندیمان پێوه بکە لەسەر ناو ژمارەیهی سەروددا یان بەو نێمهیه.

Arabic

عربي
إذا كنت انت أو اي شخص تعرفه بحاجة إلى مساعدة لفهم أو قراءة هذه الوثيقة، الرجاء الاتصال على الرقم اعلاه، أو مراسلتنا عبر البريد الإلكتروني

Urdu

أردو
اگر آپ یا آپ کے جاننے والے کسی شخص کو اس دستاویز کو سمجھنے یا پڑھنے کیلئے مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو برائے مہربانی مندرجہ بالا نمبر پر ہم سے رابطہ کریں یا ہمیں ای میل کریں۔

Farsi

فارسی
اگر جناب عالی یا شخص دیگری که شما اورا می شناسید برای خواندن یا فهمیدن این مدارک نیاز به کمک دارد لطفاً با ما بوسیله شماره بالا یا ایمیل تماس حاصل فرمایید.

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