



## Continuous pill taking (page 1 of 1)

### What is continuous pill taking?

Continuous pill taking (also known as extended pill taking), is a way of extending the number of active (combined) contraceptive pills beyond 21 days, and shortening the pill-free break.

### What are the benefits of doing this?

- it makes the pill safer as a contraceptive
- it reduces period-related problems such as period pain, PMT, migraine and heavy periods
- it is convenient for controlling acne and endometriosis, or when you don't want to have a period for special occasions.

There are 3 ways of taking the pill:

1. **The standard way** is to take the pill every day for 3 weeks, and then stop for one week (7 days) to have a period.
2. **The simple way** is to take the 3 strips in the box without any breaks, just go from one strip to the next (this is called tricycling.) When you reach the end of the strips have a break but only for 4 days. Then start the next strip of pills. You will have a period every 9 weeks instead of every 4.
3. **The sophisticated way** is to start taking the pill and just keep taking it until you start bleeding. You must take the entire strip even if you bleed. When you have had a bleed for 3 days on the pill, you should stop the pill for 4 days.

After this you restart the pill and keep taking it.

However many strips of pills you took before you bled, is the number of strips you will be able to take each time before you bleed. In some women this can be anything from 2 to 10 strips or more. This means you can work out when your next 'period' will be. You can then adjust your pill taking to bleed when it is convenient for you.

If you need this information in another language or medium (audio, large print, etc) please contact Customer Care on 0800 374 208 email: [customer-care@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:customer-care@salisbury.nhs.uk).

You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

If you are unhappy with the advice you have been given by your GP, consultant, or another healthcare professional, you may ask for a second (or further) opinion.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: [patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk) if you would like a reference list.

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