

## Skidmore College Health Services

### Read this before beginning your pills:

1. **Start** your first package of pills on the **first Sunday** following the **onset** of bleeding from your menstrual period (even if you are still bleeding). If bleeding begins on a Sunday, start that same Sunday.
2. Take one pill a day until you finish the package. If you are using a 21-day pack, stop for seven days and then start a new pack. If you are using a 28-day pack, start a new pack as soon as you have finished the previous one. For either the 21-day pack or 28-day pack you will start a new package on the same day of the week (i.e.: Sunday) every cycle.
3. After your first package of pills, **DO NOT** wait for bleeding to begin or end before starting a new package. Start on schedule (the very next day after finishing the last pack). One of the side effects of the pill is a missed period. If this happens to you, but you have not forgotten any pills, you are probably not pregnant. If you are concerned come in for a pregnancy test.
4. Take the pill at the same time every day.
5. If you **forget one** “active”\* pill, take it as soon as you remember and continue your regular schedule. This may mean taking two pills on the same day.
6. If you **forget 2** “active” pills in a row in **week 1 or week 2** of your pack: Take two pills on the day you remember and two the next day. Finish the package. Also use another method of birth control (condoms or foam) for the next seven- (7) days.  
If you **forget 2** “active” pills in a row in the **3<sup>rd</sup> week**: If you are a **Sunday Starter**, keep taking 1 pill every day until Sunday. On Sunday, throw out the rest of your pack and start a new pack of pills on the same day. If you are a **Day 1 Starter**, throw out the rest of the pill pack and start a new pack that same day. You may not get a period this month but this is expected. However, if you miss two periods in a row come in for a pregnancy test.
7. If you **forget 3** “active” pills in a row: If you are a **Sunday Starter**, keep taking 1 pill every day until Sunday. On Sunday, throw out the rest of the pack and start a new pack of pills that same day. **\*And use another method of birth control (condoms/foam) for the next seven- (7) days.** If you are a **Day 1 Starter**: Throw out the rest of the pack and start new pack that same day. You may not get a period this month but this is expected. However, if you miss two periods in a row come in for a pregnancy test.
8. Use a back-up method for the following situations:
  - a. The first cycle of pills for the first seven (7) days.
  - b. While you are taking antibiotics and then for the next seven (7) days.
  - c. During a cycle when you have vomiting or diarrhea until you get your next period.
9. Read the package insert that comes with the pill.
10. If you are being treated for a medical problem, always tell the doctor you are taking the pill.
11. Learn the Danger Signals of the pills (ACHES) and call Skidmore Health Services if you develop any of the following:
  - Abdominal pain (**severe**)
  - Chest pain (**severe**) or shortness of breath
  - Headaches (**severe**)
  - Eye problems: blurred vision, flashing lights, blindness
  - Severe leg pain (calf or thigh)
12. Return to the Health Services after the first three- (3) cycles of pills for a pill check.

\* 28-day packs contain 21 days of active (contains hormones) pills and 7 days of inactive (placebo/no hormone) pills.