FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

about the birth control pill

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The pill reduces cycle-length variability by controlling concentrations of sex hormones. This reduces natural production of hormones, thus inhibiting ovulation and preventing pregnancy.

WHAT ARE THE SEX HORMONES?

The female sex hormones are estrogen and progesterone. Estrogen helps regulate the menstrual cycle, and progesterone aids pregnancy.

ARE THERE DIFFERENT PILLS?

Yes, there are two main types. The combined pill contains both estrogen and progesterone. The mini pill only contains progesterone.

CONSULT YOUR DOCTOR TO DISCUSS WHETHER ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES ARE RIGHT FOR YOU!

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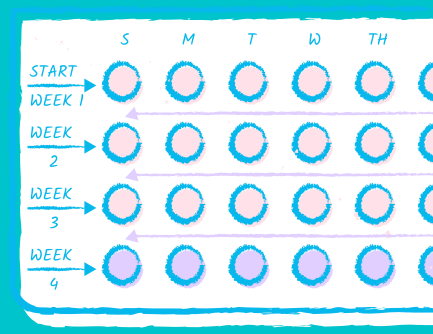

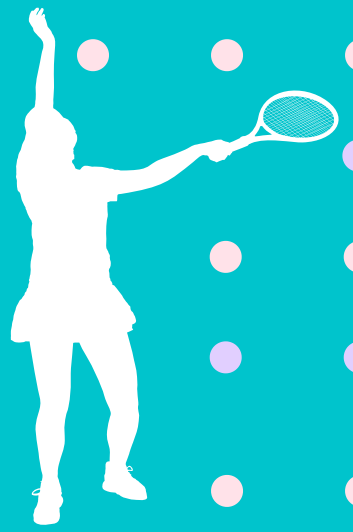

The Female Athlete & Birth Control

How oral contraceptive pills affect your body, your hormones, and your athletic performance

EFFECTS OF ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES ON ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE

PROS

Altered resting lipid & carbohydrate metabolism leaves extra fuel for exercise

Stabilized hormones minimize potential changes in performance

Negative period symptoms are reduced

Athletes can control when bleeding occurs by timing pills

CONS

Increases in body mass must be carried during performance

Core body temperature rises, which decreases muscle endurance

Estrogen-containing pills have a risk of blood clots

Potential for retention of water or disruption of electrolyte balance

NO EFFECT ON:

Hemoglobin levels, maximum heart rate, ventilation, anaerobic capacity, muscle strength, and recovery

The prevalence of oral contraceptive use in female athletes matches that of women in the general public

14%

Fourteen percent of women aged 15-49 take the pill

2nd

This makes it the 2nd most common form of birth control

DISCLAIMER

Potential effects of oral contraceptive pills on athletic performance are not entirely conclusive. This is in part due to a diversity of hormone levels in various pills and the range of fitness levels within the female athlete population.