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!

REFERENCES

The Female Athlete & Birth Control
How oral contraceptive pills affect your body, your hormones, and your athletic performance

BY CALLA SULLIVAN
# 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
- Recovery

## 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.

**Fourteen percent of women aged 15-49 take the pill**

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