COMBINED ORAL CONTRACEPTIVE

Combined oral contraception is a daily pill that contains low doses of estrogen and progestin to prevent pregnancy. The method is a short-term reversible contraceptive option. Effectiveness depends on user’s adherence.

MECHANISM OF ACTION

Oral contraceptives prevent fertilization. The combination of estrogen and progestin prevents ovulation by providing negative feedback to the hypothalamic-pituitary gland and thickening the cervical mucus, which stops sperm from entering the uterus. It is possible that combined oral contraception might alter the endometrium, but evidence is insufficient to show implantation is prevented by oral contraceptive use. Combined oral contraception does not disrupt an existing pregnancy.

METHOD EFFECTIVENESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implant</td>
<td>99.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male sterilization</td>
<td>99.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hormonal IUD</td>
<td>99.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female sterilization</td>
<td>99.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copper IUD</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Injectable</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male condom</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No method</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

91% COMBINED ORAL CONTRACEPTIVE

Note: Method effectiveness is the percent of women NOT experiencing pregnancy within the first year of use of each method.

It’s a common misconception that combined oral contraceptives:

...CAUSE FETAL ABNORMALITIES

RESEARCH SHOWS the risk of pregnancy is extremely low. If a woman does become pregnant, her risk of complications is no higher than the general population.

...CAUSE CANCER

RESEARCH SHOWS users have a reduced risk for ovarian and endometrial cancer. Long-term use may slightly increase risk for breast cancer among current users. Risk among former users is decreased.

...CAUSE INFERTILITY

RESEARCH SHOWS that after discontinuing use, women promptly return to their previous state of fertility. Approximately 79%-95% of women report a desired pregnancy within the first year.

...ARE NOT SAFE FOR YOUTH

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION deems contraception appropriate for youth and states no medical reason to deny contraception based solely on age.

Oral Contraception Use in South Asia

Approximately 37 million women are using oral contraception in South Asia. If oral contraceptives were banned in the Philippines, approximately 3.2 million women would be at risk of an unintended pregnancy if they chose no other method.

NUMBER OF WOMEN USING ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES (IN THOUSANDS)

- Less than 1,000
- 1,000-2,000
- 2,000-4,000
- More than 5,000
Sources


**Method Effectiveness**

**Note:** Estimates are based on a typical couple’s use of the method. Estimates for perfect use of the method are higher.  

**Number of Women Using Oral Contraceptives**