**COC Advice Leaflet**

**A new way to take the combined pill: no 7 day gap**

The good things about not having gaps when you take the combined pill are:

* A lower chance of getting pregnant;
* Fewer bleeds, or none at all; and
* Just as safe as the old way.

**Every day of the year**

Take a pill every day of the year, with no gaps. We prescribe a low dose pill for this. You might get some irregular bleeding, especially at first. Later it should settle down to having no bleeding at all.

If the bleeding is annoying, you can use one of these methods to control the timing of it:

1. Have a 4 day gap after every 4 packs (84 days) of the pill.  Or
2. Wait till you start bleeding, then have a 4 day gap.  Or
3. If you want to avoid bleeding for a holiday or any other special time, have a 4 day gap the week before, to get the bleed over with.

Don't have a gap longer than 4 days. The simplest way is to have no gaps at all and just take the pill every day.

If you still get annoying bleeding, another option is to use a standard dose pill, and have a 4 day gap after every 3 packs (63 days) of the pill.

**Missed pills**

It takes 7 days of pill taking before the pill works to stop you getting pregnant. After those 7 days, the 4 day gap will not put you at risk of getting pregnant. But if you miss more than 7 days in a row, the pill will stop working.

The best plan is never to miss pills, but if you do, it should never be for more than 7 days, and then you must start taking them again. You should not have the gaps too close to each other.

If you are unsure whether or not you have taken the pill correctly contact a doctor or pharmacist very soon to see if you need emergency contraception.

If you're not sure what to do, we're happy to hear from you, and do get in touch quickly.

**Stopping the pill**

If you decide to stop taking the pill, you need to start a new method of contraception straight away.

You will not be protected during the few days after you stop, it is not the same as the few days of your gap.

**This leaflet applies only to the *combined* pill, and not to the *mini-pill (*progestogen only pill) which must always be taken daily with no gaps at all.**