

## **CONTINUOUS HORMONE/BIRTH CONTROL PILL (Tricycling)**

Birth Control Pills may be prescribed to be taken in cycles (21 days on, 7 days off) or continuously. Pills may be prescribed continuously for patients with endometriosis, bad cramps, Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), or other reasons. Continuously means that you will be taking one pill that contains the female hormones, estrogen and progesterone, every day. Taking the pill this way helps keep the lining of the uterus very thin. The goal is for you to have no periods.

You will not take a week of placebo pills (pills without hormones, “sugar pills”) and will not have a regular monthly menstrual period. You may have some irregular spotting or bleeding as your body gets adjusted to this new medication, especially in the first six months.

### **How do I take them?**

**When you have a 28-day pack of pills**, take the three weeks of hormone pills but not the week of placebo pills (the last seven pills that are a different color). When you finish the hormone pills, throw the pack away and **start a new pack the next day**.

**If you have a 21-day pack of pills**, start a new pack the day after you finish all the pills in your current pack.

### **Do I need a period?**

It is quite safe not to have a period when you are on the pill. (If you have the slightest suspicion that you might be pregnant it is very important that you do a pregnancy test or come in for a check up.) You should have a ‘withdrawal’ period every 6 months – you should take the last 7 days of a pack and this will allow a period to occur. Doing this reduces the chances of irregular spotting or bleeding.

### **What if I am bleeding with the continuous pills?**

If you are bleeding heavily (soaking a large pad or super tampon more than every 2 hours) and it does not slow down with 4 hours of bed rest or if you are experiencing a heavy menstrual flow (a soaked pad or tampon every 2 or 3 hours) for more than 7 days, you need to call and come in to be seen.

### **Am I protected from pregnancy?**

Taking the birth control pill continuously does protect you from pregnancy just as if you were taking the pill the regular way. Birth control pills do not protect a woman from getting a sexually transmitted disease however.