

Patient Name (Please Print): \_\_\_\_\_

### **Progestin Only Oral Contraceptive Pills (POPs) FACT SHEET**

**Progestin only oral contraceptive pills (POPs)** are a form of daily birth control. The pills contain a naturally-occurring hormone, progestin.

POPs work to prevent pregnancy by preventing the egg from being released from the ovary, and also by changing the cervical mucous to prevent sperm from reaching an egg.

POPs must be taken every day, at the same time each day, to work properly. If they are taken correctly (perfectly), they are very effective at preventing pregnancy. However, most women do not take their pills perfectly. POPs are less effective when not taken perfectly, and women may have an unintended pregnancy if a pill is missed or even taken a few hours late. For the typical woman using POPs, they are 91% effective at preventing pregnancy.

**POPs do not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).** Condoms are the best way for sexually active people to reduce the risk of infection. Always use a condom if you or your partner has other sex partners.

#### **Advantages of POPs:**

- Decreased pain with periods and/or lighter menstrual periods – for some women, menstrual periods stop completely
- Nothing to do right before sex (to prevent pregnancy)
- May improve PMS (premenstrual syndrome) symptoms
- Can decrease risk of uterine (endometrial) cancer
- Ability to become pregnant returns quickly when you stop taking POPs
- Can use immediately after giving birth, and when breastfeeding

#### **Disadvantages of POPs:**

- Must take a pill every day, at the same time each day
- May be less effective (higher risk of pregnancy) if pills are not taken perfectly (taken at the same time each day)
- May have irregular menstrual bleeding or spotting
- Side effects – POPs are generally well-tolerated, but some women experience side effects such as breast tenderness, or change in mood. Most of these symptoms improve with time.

#### **Contraindications- POPs can not be used by women who:**

- Have a history of breast cancer
- POPs may interact with certain epilepsy (anti-seizure) or anti-retroviral medications.

Tell your clinician if you have any of these risk factors or conditions, or of any other past or current medical problems or concerns. Your clinician will evaluate your history to help you decide if POPs are the correct choice for you.

**Warning signs – Call your health care provider right away if you:**

- Think you are pregnant
- Have been, or might have been, exposed to an STI
- Have new or worsening headaches
- Have depression or change in mood

Regular physical examinations for routine health care, STI and cancer screening are strongly recommended.

Patient Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Clinician Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_