

Skipping Periods on Birth Control

Do you need to have a period if you take birth control?

The short answer is: no.

Combined hormonal birth control methods contain estrogen and progestin. Most of these birth control options have 3 weeks of hormones and 1 week of no hormones. You most likely have your period during the hormone-free week. **Skipping periods on birth control is generally safe.**

With the pill and monthly ring, you can skip all periods. This can help problems related to periods (like migraines, premenstrual syndrome, anemia, etc) and can help with gender distress.

If you don't want a period, just skip that hormone-free week. Here's how:

Pill Users

Pill users: Most pill packs contain 21 active pills (with hormones) and 7 placebo pills (with no hormones). The placebo pills are the last few pills in the pack -- they are not the same color as the rest. To skip a period, don't take the placebo pills. Instead, **go straight from the last active pill in one pack to the first active pill** in the next pack.

If you use 28-day packs and skip the last 7 pills of each pack, you will need to buy 17 packs each year. Insurance plans may not cover the extra packs.

Some pill packs contain 84 active pills and 7 placebo pills. To avoid having a period, you can skip the last 7 pills. Using these 3-month packs may cost less.

Monthly Ring (NuvaRing) Users

Skip the ring-free week. Keep the ring in your vagina at all times and change it to a new ring every 3-5 weeks. Many people find it easier to change the monthly ring on the same date of each month.

You can skip some periods with the yearly ring and the patch—for instance, during a vacation. However, there isn't any research on this with the yearly ring, and there is some concern that doing this regularly with the patch may raise your risk for blood clots.

Yearly Ring (Annovera) Users

It's possible to skip a period on the yearly ring by leaving it in.

Patch Users

Skip the patch-free week and put on a new patch during the fourth week. You could also change the patch every 9 days rather than weekly. This means that you'll use a box of 3 patches every 27 days.