**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.

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

**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.

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**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.