

POP - the progesterone only pill

What is the progesterone only pill (POP)?

The POP is a contraceptive pill that only contains the hormone progesterone. It is sometimes also known as the Mini Pill. Unlike the more commonly used combined oral contraceptive pill (commonly known as The Pill), they do not contain the hormone oestrogen.

There are two broad categories of POP available in Australia. They work very differently and this affects how you take the pill and manage things if you forget a pill.

1. POPs that do not stop egg production/ovulation.

There are several brands of POP in this category in Australia. They include:

- Microlut
- Noriday 28
- Locilan 29

2. POPs that stop egg production/ovulation

Currently in Australia there is only one brand of this type of pill:

- Slinda

How do POPs work to prevent pregnancy?

All types of POP have the effect of blocking the passage of sperm through the cervix into the uterus/womb. This prevents sperm from being able to fertilise eggs produced by the ovary. The ability of POPs to stop sperm passing through the cervix is short lived. This means it is crucial to take most POPs within the same 3-hour window every day.

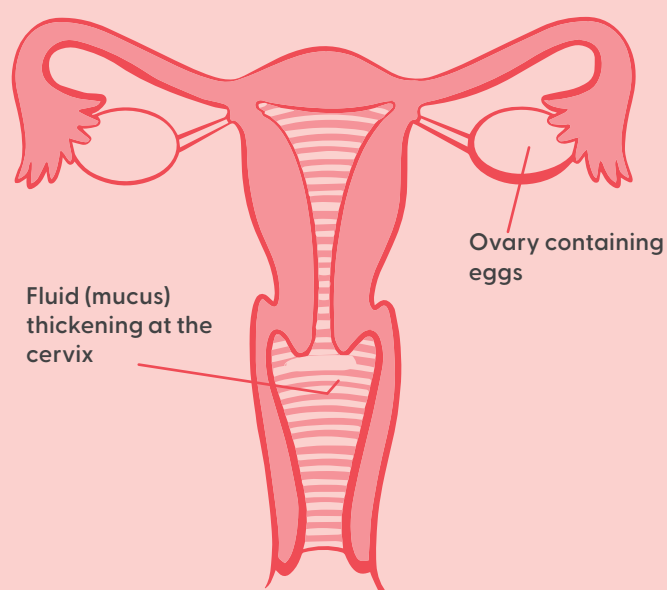
The Slinda POP has the additional benefit of also preventing the ovary from releasing eggs. This effect is less time critical and means you need to take a pill within a 24 hour window to prevent pregnancy.


How effective is the POP for preventing pregnancy?

This depends on how strictly a POP is taken every day. With perfect use POPs can be up to 99% effective, but typically they are considered to be about 93% effective.

Another way to express this is that up to 7 people out of 100 who are using a POP will become pregnant each year.

Female Reproductive System





When you take the mini pill for the first time or after a break, it can take up to three days to start working.

Speak with a doctor, nurse or pharmacist about the best way to get started.

How do I get the POP?

Talk to a doctor. Starting a POP for the first time requires an assessment by a doctor. If you and your doctor decide that a POP is right for you, your doctor will write a prescription for you to take to a pharmacy.

How do I take a POP?

A tablet from the pill packet needs to be swallowed every day. The packets look like monthly calendars to help you keep track of the days.


Microlut/Noriday/Locilan need to be taken for three consecutive days before being relied on for contraception.

It is important to remember that all POPs except Slinda MUST BE taken within the same 3-hour window of every day.

If you are taking Slinda, then you should aim to take a tablet at the same time every day but Slinda will still be working as long as you are not more than 24 hours late in taking your pill.

If you are late for a pill or miss a pill then you may be at risk of pregnancy. Refer to the Missed Pill fact sheet for POPs for more information.

Benefits of POPs

- Can be taken by people who are not recommended to have oestrogen for medical reasons.
 - Can be taken by people who are breastfeeding or who have just had a baby.
 - Contains less hormones than some other types of contraception.
 - A choice if you can't take the hormone oestrogen.
 - You can take it whilst breast feeding and can start immediately after having a baby.
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Disadvantages of POP

- Effectiveness of POP can be reduced by some medications/herbal remedies, some illnesses such as vomiting and diarrhoea.
- Reliable daily use is necessary to prevent pregnancy.
- No protection against STIs.
- Possibility of some hormonal side effects.
- Slinda is more costly than some other options (as it's not listed on the PBS).

The POP has not been shown to cause weight gain.

Possible Side Effects of POP

- Spotting (light vaginal bleeding).
- Headaches.
- Breast tenderness.
- Acne.
- Mood changes.

Often these side effects lessen with time.

Is POP right for me?

The Progesterone only pill might not be right for you if you:

- have difficulties remembering to take medications
- have breast cancer or who have been treated for breast cancer
- have certain medical conditions such as severe liver disease
- are taking certain medications/remedies that may interact with the POP

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For more information, support and advice visit www.fpt.org.au

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