Birth control pills are a simple, safe and effective way to prevent pregnancy. Take one pill a day, at the same time every day, and you are protected against unplanned pregnancy. The pill uses hormones to prevent ovulation and thicken your cervical mucus lining. Once you stop taking the pill, you will return to fertility—the pill has no effect on your ability to get pregnant in the future.

While taking the pill, many women feel about the same. Your period should become very predictable, coming in the last week of the pill pack. If you have bleeding at other times of the month, continue taking the pills as usual. Over time, your periods will be lighter, shorter, and less painful. The pill also lowers your risk of getting cancer of the uterus and ovaries. In the first two to three months of use, some women experience nausea, bleeding between periods, weight change, and/or breast tenderness or swelling. These problems often go away after those first few months. If they do not, reach out to your medical provider to find a birth control method that is right for you.

The pill does not protect against the spread of STIs, so condoms are still recommended. If you stop taking the pill and have unprotected sex, take Emergency Contraception (EC) right away. EC can prevent pregnancy up to five days after unprotected sex. The sooner you take it, the better it works.

How do I start the pill?
- There are two ways to start the pill:
  - Quick Start: Take your first pill as soon as you get the pack.
  - Next period: Take your first pill within the first 5 days of your next period.
- If you take your first pill up to 5 days after the start of your period, you are protected against pregnancy right away. If more than 5 days, use condoms as back-up for the first 7 days.

What if I miss pills?
- I forgot ONE pill: Take your pill as soon as you can.
- I forgot TWO pills or more: Take the most recent missed pill as soon as you can and discard any other missed pills. Take your next pill at the usual time. Use condoms for 7 days. Use Emergency Contraception (EC) if you have unprotected sex in the first week of the pill pack.
- No method of birth control is 100% effective. If you take all of your birth control pills on time, they are up to 99% effective. If you miss or delay some pills, they are 91-94% effective.

Call your health provider if you experience these RARE symptoms:
- Leg pain, swelling, and redness
- Weakness or numbness on one side of your body
- Bad headache
- Vision problems
- Chest pain and/or unusual shortness of breath

Insurance Information: The pill is covered at no out-of-pocket expense for students enrolled in an NYU-sponsored student health insurance plan. For all other plans, please consult with your insurance carrier.