



# Contraceptive start methods

The choice of when to start birth control is determined to a large extent by the patient. In general, there are 3 main methods to start combined hormonal contraceptive pills, patches, injections and vaginal rings.

1. The Quick Start Method
2. The Sunday Start Method
3. The First Day of Period Start Method

For the initial cycle of progestin-only pills, it is recommended to start anytime from day 1 up to and including day 5 of the menstrual period. With this approach, protection from pregnancy begins right away and no back-up method is required. If the progestin-only pill is started on any other day of the cycle, a back-up method of contraception is required every time the patient has sex for the next 48 hours.

	Quick Start	Sunday Start	First Day of Period Start
<b>Initiation</b>	Birth control is started on the day the prescription is picked up	Birth control is started on the first Sunday after the menstrual period begins	Birth control is started on the first day of the menstrual period
<b>Advantage</b>	Reduces delays and increases adherence, as contraception can be started at any point during the menstrual cycle	Can be easier to remember when to start as patients continue month to month	Achieves contraceptive efficacy faster than other methods
<b>Protection from pregnancy</b>	Begins 7 days after initiation	Begins 7 days after initiation	Begins on the day of initiation
<b>Back-up method</b>	Required for the first 7 days	Required for the first 7 days	Not required <sup>1,2</sup>

1 There are some exceptions, e.g., the first treatment cycle of the patch requires a back-up method.

2 Avoid using a diaphragm or cervical cap as a back-up method when using a Quick Start or Sunday Start with a vaginal ring.