



How to manage contraceptive missed doses

Missing a dose or doses of birth control can be stressful and is one of the major reasons for unintended pregnancy. The most effective birth control is one that your patient can remember to use consistently and correctly. Here are guidelines to follow as you counsel your patients who have missed using birth control as recommended.

	Option	How to Manage
1	Vaginal ring	<p><i><3 hours</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendation is to leave the ring in the vagina for 3 weeks continuously. If the ring is out of the vagina for less than 3 hours, effectiveness is not reduced. Thus, the ring should be rinsed with cool to lukewarm (not hot) water and reinserted within the 3-hour timeframe. If the ring is lost, a new vaginal ring should be inserted and the regimen continued without alteration. <p><i>>3 continuous hours</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weeks 1 and 2: The ring should be reinserted as soon as possible. A nonhormonal back-up method is required until the ring has been in the vagina continuously for 7 days. Week 3: The ring should be discarded and 1 of the following 2 options should be used: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Immediately insert a new ring OR <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2) Wait for withdrawal bleeding to subside and then insert a new ring no later than 7 days from the time the previous ring was removed or expelled. A nonhormonal back-up method is required until the new ring has been used continuously for 7 days.
2	Patch	<p><i>Partial or complete detachment</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ≤24 hours: Reapply to the same place or replace with a new patch immediately. No additional contraception is required, and the next patch should be applied on the usual "patch change day." More than 24 hours OR unsure of when the patch lifted or detached: Stop the current contraceptive cycle and start a new cycle right away by putting on a new patch. There is now a new patch change day. Back-up contraception is required for the first 7 days of the new cycle only. <p><i>Patch not changed</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Week 1 or day 1: Apply the first patch of the cycle as soon as possible. There is now a new patch change day. Back-up contraception is required for the first 7 days of the new cycle. Week 2 (day 8) or week 3 (day 15): If <48 hours, apply a new patch right away. The next patch should be applied on the usual patch change day. No back-up contraception is required. Week 2 (day 8) or week 3 (day 15): If ≥48 hours, stop the current contraceptive cycle. Start a new 4-week cycle right away by putting on a new patch. There is now a new patch change day. Back-up contraception is required for the first 7 days of the new cycle. Week 4 (day 22): If the patch is not removed on day 22, it should be removed right away. Start the new cycle on the usual patch change day, which is the day after day 28. No back-up contraception is required.





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3	Progestin-only pill	<p>Norethindrone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <3 hours late taking pill: Take the pill as soon as possible, then go back to taking pills at regular time. No back-up method is required, as effectiveness is not reduced. • >3 hours late taking pill: Take the pill as soon as possible, then go back to taking pills at regular time. This may mean taking 2 pills in 1 day. A back-up method is required for the next 48 hours. <p>Drospirenone:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <24 hours late taking pill: Take the pill as soon as possible, then go back to taking pills at regular time. This may mean taking 2 pills in 1 day. No back-up method is required, as effectiveness is not reduced. • >24 hours late taking pill: Take the pill as soon as possible, then go back to taking pills at regular time. This may mean taking 2 pills in 1 day. A back-up method is required for the next 48 hours.
4	Combined hormonal contraceptive pill	<p><i>Missed 1 pill</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take as soon as possible, then and take the next pill at the usual time. This means that 2 pills may be taken in 1 day. <p><i>Missed 2 pills in a row (first 2 weeks)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take 2 pills as soon as possible, then 2 pills the next day. • Then take 1 pill a day until the pack is finished. • A nonhormonal back-up method is required in the 7 days after the missed doses. <p><i>Missed 2 pills in a row (week 3) OR missed ≥ 3 pills in a row (anytime in the cycle)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday Start: Keep taking 1 pill a day until Sunday. On Sunday, safely discard the rest of the pack and start a new pack that day. A nonhormonal back-up method is required in the first 7 days after the missed doses. You may not have a period this month. • Other than Sunday Start: Safely discard the rest of the pill pack and start a new pack that same day. A nonhormonal back-up method is required in the first 7 days after the missed doses. You may not have a period this month.
5	Injection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If an injection is not given within 13 weeks of the last dose, a pregnancy test should be done before any further treatment with depot medroxyprogesterone acetate injection.

