**Continuous Pill Taking**

**What is continuous pill taking?**

This is a way of taking the pill leaving out the regular pill free break – i.e. ***not*** in the usual 21 tablets then stopping for 7 days way (21/7 for short).

We have known for some time that the routine of *not taking tablets for 7 days weakens the pill’s main effect* of stopping your ovaries from releasing an egg: so it makes egg-release more likely when pills are missed. Since it’s quite common to forget 1 or 2 pills, ordinary women find the method lets them down about 10 times more often than if “over 99% effective” was true, in the real world.

It also means you don’t have to have regular monthly bleeds, which have no known benefits.

**What are the benefits for me?**

It makes the pill more effective as a contraceptive.

It reduces problems such as period pain, PMT, migraine and other headaches, and more.

It’s convenient for when you want to avoid bleeding e.g. for holidays and special occasions.

**How do I take the pill continuously?**

Start your pill on the correct day of the week (as shown on the strip).

Take one pill at about the same time each day, at a time that is easy for you to remember.

Take all the pills in that strip, and then start the next strip without a break.

Keep taking the strips without a break

**How long can I take the pill continuously?**

Indefinitely – until either you choose another method or your surgery/clinic advises this.

**Isn’t it better for me to have “periods” every month?**

Modern contraception is very safe and women do not need to bleed every month to know that they are not pregnant.

The “period” on the pill is completely artificial and is just your womb’s response to stopping the pill (and therefore the hormones) for a few days. It is called a “hormone withdrawal bleed”.

Continuous pill-taking just stops you having that completely unnecessary regular bleed.

**What happens if I get bleeding while taking the pill continuously?**

Irregular bleeding and/or ’spotting’ during the first months of continuous pill-taking can occur, but most women find this becomes acceptable as it lessens over time.

If the bleeding becomes troublesome to you, e.g. by continuing for more than a few days, stop the pill for 4 days. No need to contact the surgery or clinic first. Also:

o Unless you also missed other tablets for any reason in the previous week, no need to take extra precautions.

o Then restart your pill taking the correct pill for that day, leaving out the 4 unused pills.

o Continue as before.

Having this 4-day break usually works to stop or improve the bleeding, but if it carries on and does not resolve, you should seek advice from your surgery/clinic in case you need a check up to exclude other causes of bleeding e.g. Chlamydia