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## **Instructions for Taking Birth Control Pills Continuously** To Avoid Monthly Bleeding and Associated Problems (Pain/Cramps, PMS, Headaches)

Take one hormone containing pill at approximately the same time every day [do not take any of the placebo (fake) tablets]. We recommend that you punch out and throw away the placebo tablets at the end of the pack so you will not take them by mistake. When all of the hormone-containing pills are taken in the pack, start a new pack the next day. Do not take a break. If bothersome bleeding or persistent spotting occurs, stop the hormone containing pills for 3 days only. [You can either punch out those 3 days of pills and then resume pills OR do not discard any pills and simply stop pills for 3 days and re-label your pack with a new day strip to the correct the day of the week.] Taking a 3-day break from the pills allows the lining in the uterus to be shed, so be prepared to have bleeding when you stop the pills. Even if you are still bleeding, restart your pills after the 3-day break.

### **Guidelines For Taking Continuous Pills:**

Never take more than a 3-day break from your pills. Don't take a break unless you have bothersome bleeding (or spotting that lasts several days). You must always take at least 3 weeks of hormone containing pills before taking a 3-day break. But, there is no maximum number of weeks. You can take as many weeks or months in a row as you like. If you are not having any bleeding or spotting, then taking a 3-day break is not necessary. Many patients find that they can eventually take months of pills continuously with no bleeding. Initially, many will experience bleeding every few weeks, which requires a 3-day break to resolve. You must take your pills every day at approximately the same time each day. Some women find it helpful to set an alarm on their cell phone or put their pills by their toothbrush or makeup.

Be patient!! While some patients do not experience frequent bleeding when initiating continuous pills, most will have bleeding and spotting that requires taking a 3-day break every few weeks. Some patients have temporary nuisance side effects (nausea, headaches, PMS, etc) when initiating the pill. If you have any problems or questions, call your healthcare provider.