

## Oral Contraceptive Pill – 4 Day Break

When the pill was first introduced in the 1960s it contained 200 micrograms of oestrogen and was taken for 21 days with a 7 day break.

Over the years the dose of oestrogen in the pill has been reduced and most pills now contain either 30 or 20 micrograms of oestrogen and the '7 day break' tradition has continued.

The pill was designed to be taken around the same time each day. With these very low doses of the pill it is possible that ovarian follicle activity is not going to be fully suppressed and so there is a risk that you may ovulate and be at risk of pregnancy if the pill is not always taken correctly.

Current evidence indicates that the 7 day pill break is too long.

Perfect use of the pill is almost impossible to achieve. Up to 9 out of 100 women may become pregnant unless they never make even the smallest mistake in taking the pill.

To reduce your risk of becoming pregnant we are now advising that you reduce your pill free break from 7 days to 4 days.

Reducing the break to 4 days you will improve the safety of your contraceptive.

