
Combined Oral Contraceptive Pills (COCs)



Oral contraceptives have been used by women for more than 30 years to prevent millions of unintended pregnancies throughout the world. They are currently used by more than 84 million women worldwide, half of whom live in developing countries. ■

Note to facilitator:

The *Checklist for Screening Clients Who Want to Initiate Combined Oral Contraceptives* and the MEC quick reference chart are tools that can be used to help determine which clients are medically eligible to use COCs.

Illustration credit: Salim Khalaf/FHI

Types of COCs

Content	Combination of two hormones: estrogen and progestin
Phasic	Monophasic, biphasic, triphasic
Dose	Low-dose (most common): 30-35 µg of estrogen or less High-dose: 50 µg of estrogen
Pills per pack	21: all active (7 days break between packs) 28: 21 active + 7 inactive pills (no break between packs)