

## PACKAGE LEAFLET: INFORMATION FOR THE USER

# Binovum<sup>®</sup> oral contraceptive tablets

## Norethisterone/ethinylestradiol

Binovum is a registered trademark

### Five important things to know about the Pill.

- The Pill is a reliable contraceptive and may reduce your risk of cancer of the ovary and womb if used for a long time.
- The Pill will not protect you against sexually transmitted diseases.
- This medicine can increase your risk of problems such as blood clots and breast cancer.
- Some women should not take the Pill because of current medical problems or illnesses. Please read the leaflet to make sure Binovum is right for you.
- To prevent pregnancy it is important to take Binovum as instructed and start each strip on time. Please make sure that you understand what to do if you miss a pill or think you are pregnant.

### Read all of this leaflet carefully before you start taking this medicine.

- Keep this leaflet. You may need to read it again.
- If you have any questions or need more advice, ask your doctor, family planning nurse or pharmacist.
- This medicine has been prescribed for you. Do not pass it on to others. It may harm them.
- **If any of the side effects gets severe**, or if you notice any not listed in this leaflet, please tell your doctor, family planning nurse or pharmacist.

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- 4 Possible side effects
- 5 How to store Binovum
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## 1 What Binovum does

Binovum is a combined oral contraceptive pill ('the Pill'). **You take it to stop getting pregnant.**

This contraceptive contains two types of female sex hormones, oestrogen and progestogen. These hormones prevent an egg being released from your ovaries so you can't get pregnant. Also, Binovum makes the fluid (mucus) in your cervix thicker which makes it more difficult for sperm to enter the womb.

Binovum is a 21-day Pill - you take one each day for 21 days, followed by 7 days when you take no pills.

### The benefits of taking the Pill include:

- it is one of the most reliable reversible methods of contraception if used correctly

- it doesn't interrupt sex
- it usually makes your periods regular, lighter and less painful
- it may help with pre-menstrual symptoms.

Binovum will not protect you against sexually transmitted infections, such as Chlamydia or HIV. Only condoms can help to do this.

**Binovum needs to be taken as directed to prevent pregnancy.**

## **2 Make sure Binovum is OK for you**

It's important that you understand the benefits and risks of taking the Pill before you start taking it, or when deciding whether to carry on taking it. Although the Pill is suitable for most healthy women it isn't suitable for everyone.

→ Tell your doctor if you have any of the illnesses or risk factors mentioned in this leaflet.

### **Before you start taking the Pill**

- Your doctor will ask about you and your family's medical problems and check your blood pressure. You may also need other checks, such as a breast examination but only if these are necessary for you or you have any special concerns.

### **While you're on the Pill**

- You will need **regular check-ups** with your doctor or family planning nurse, usually when you need another prescription of the Pill.
- You should go for **regular cervical smear tests**.
- **Check your breasts** and nipples every month for changes – tell your doctor if you can see or feel anything odd, such as lumps or dimpling of the skin.
- **If you need a blood test** tell your doctor that you are taking the Pill, because the Pill can affect the results of some tests.
- **If you're going to have an operation**, make sure your doctor knows about it. You may need to stop taking the Pill about 4–6 weeks before the operation. This is to reduce the risk of a blood clot (see section 2.1). Your doctor will tell you when you can start taking the Pill again.

### **2.1 The Pill and blood clots**

The Pill may slightly increase your risk of having a blood clot (called a thrombosis), especially in the first year of taking it.

A clot in a leg vein – a deep vein thrombosis (or DVT) – is not always serious. However, if it moves up the veins to the lungs, it can cause chest pain, breathlessness, collapse or even death. This is called a 'pulmonary embolism' and is very rare.

**Your chances of having a blood clot are only increased slightly by taking the Pill.**

- Of 100,000 women who are **not on the Pill** and not pregnant, about **5** will have a blood clot in a year.
- Of 100,000 women **taking a Pill** such as Binovum, about **15** will have a blood clot in a year.

- Of 100,000 women who are **pregnant**, around **60** will have a blood clot in a year.

**You are more at risk of having a blood clot in your veins:**

- as you get **older**
- if you are **seriously overweight**
- if you **smoke**
- if you or any of your close family have had **blood clots**
- if you have any **blood clotting problem** that needs treatment with a medicine such as warfarin
- if you're **off your feet for a long time** because of major surgery, injury or illness
- if you have had one or more **miscarriages**
- if you have **recently had a baby**

→ **Tell your doctor** if any of these risk factors apply to you. Taking the Pill may add to this risk so Binovum may not be suitable for you.

**Signs of a blood clot include:**

- **painful swelling in your leg**
- sudden **chest pain, difficulty breathing**
- sudden **changes in eyesight** (such as loss of vision or blurred vision)

→ **See a doctor as soon as possible. Do not take any more Binovum** until your doctor says you can. Use another method of contraception, such as condoms, in the meantime.

Very rarely, blood clots can also form in the blood vessels of the heart (causing a **heart attack**) or the brain (causing a **stroke**). In healthy young women the chance of having a heart attack or stroke is extremely small.

**You are more at risk of having a heart attack or stroke:**

- as you get **older**
- if you have **high blood pressure**
- if you **smoke** or **drink** too much **alcohol**
- if you have **high levels of fat** in your blood or are **seriously overweight**
- if you have an **irregular heartbeat** (atrial fibrillation), problems with **heart valves** or **heart failure**
- if you or someone in your close family has had a **heart attack** or **stroke** at a young age
- if you have **migraines**
- if you have **diabetes**
- if you have a blood problem called **sickle cell anaemia**

→ **Tell your doctor** if any of these risk factors apply to you. Taking the Pill may add to this risk so Binovum may not be suitable for you.

**Signs of a heart attack or stroke include:**

- sudden **crushing pains in your chest** which may reach your left arm
- sudden **weakness** or **numbness** in one side or part of your body
- **severe headache or migraine** for the first time or worse than normal
- **slurred speech** or any other difficulties affecting your speech
- any sudden **changes to your eyesight** (such as loss of vision or blurred vision)

→**See a doctor as soon as possible. Do not take any more Binovum** until your doctor says you can. Use another method of contraception, such as condoms, in the meantime.

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## **2.2 The Pill and cancer**

The Pill reduces your risk of cancer of the ovary and womb if used for a long time. However, it also seems to slightly increase your risk of **cancer of the cervix** – although this may be due to having sex without a condom, rather than the Pill. All women should have regular **smear tests**.

If you have **breast cancer**, or have had it in the past, you should not take the Pill. The Pill slightly increases your risk of breast cancer. This risk goes up the longer you're on the Pill, but returns to normal within about 10 years of stopping it. Because breast cancer is rare in women under the age of 40, the extra cases of breast cancer in current and recent Pill users are small. For example:

- Of 10,000 women who have **never taken the Pill**, about **16** will have breast cancer by the time they are 35 years old.
- Of 10,000 women who **take the Pill for 5 years in their early twenties**, about **17–18** will have breast cancer by the time they are 35 years old.
- Of 10,000 women who have **never taken the Pill**, about **100** will have breast cancer by the time they are 45 years old.
- Of 10,000 women who **take the Pill for 5 years in their early thirties**, about **111** will have breast cancer by the time they are 45 years old.

### **Your risk of breast cancer is higher:**

- as you get older
- if you have a close relative (mother, sister or grandmother) who has had breast cancer
- if you are seriously overweight

→**See a doctor as soon as possible if you notice any changes in your breasts**, such as dimpling of the skin, changes in the nipple or any lumps you can see or feel.

Taking the Pill has also been linked to liver diseases, such as jaundice and non-cancer liver tumours, but this is rare. Very rarely, the Pill has also been linked with some forms of liver cancer in women who have taken it for a long time.

→**See a doctor as soon as possible if you get severe pain in your stomach, or yellow skin or eyes** (jaundice). You may need to stop taking Binovum.

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## **2.3 Binovum should not be taken by some women**

→Tell your doctor or family planning nurse if you have any medical problems or illnesses.

**Do not take Binovum if any of the following apply to you:**

- If you are **breast feeding** and **your baby is less than 6 weeks old**
- If you have **breast or liver cancer**

- If you have an **irregular heartbeat** (atrial fibrillation), problems with **heart valves** or **heart failure**
  - If you have ever had a problem with your blood circulation. This includes **blood clots**, for example in the legs (**deep vein thrombosis**) or lungs (**pulmonary embolism**), or a **heart attack** or **stroke**
  - If you have any conditions which make you **more at risk of a blood clot** (thrombosis – see section 2.1), such as having an operation and being **off your feet for a long time**
  - If you have **very high blood pressure**
  - If you **smoke** 15 or more cigarettes a day and you are 35 years old or more
  - If you have **migraines** which affect your vision
  - If you have had **diabetes** for more than 20 years or have diabetes with secondary problems
  - If you have or have recently had a **severe liver disease**
  - If you have the disease **Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE)** with or without Raynaud's disease
  - If you are **allergic** (hypersensitive) to any of the ingredients in Binovum.
- If you suffer from any of these, or get them for the first time while taking Binovum, contact your doctor as soon as possible. Do not take Binovum as it may put your health at risk.

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#### **2.4 Binovum can make some illnesses worse**

Some of the conditions listed below can be made worse by taking the Pill. Or they may mean it is less suitable for you. You may still be able to take Binovum but you need to take special care and have check-ups more often.

**Tell your doctor or family planning nurse if any of these apply to you:**

- If you have problems with your heart, circulation or blood clotting, such as **high blood pressure**
- If you have **diabetes** without secondary problems
- If you have **gall bladder problems**
- If you have **porphyria**
- If you have a history of **migraines**
- If you have **brown patches on your face or body** (chloasma) as you may need to keep out of the sun
- If you have had any of the following **problems while pregnant** or during **previous Pill use**, such as itchy skin or blister-like rash, yellowing of skin or eyes, hearing problem, systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE), severe headaches

→Tell your doctor or family planning nurse if any of these apply to you.

**Also tell them if you get any of these for the first time while taking the Pill**, or if any get worse or come back, because you may need to stop taking Binovum and use another method of contraception, such as condoms.

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#### **2.5 Taking other medicines**

If you ever need to take another medicine at the same time as being on the Pill, always tell your doctor, pharmacist or dentist that you're taking Binovum. Also check the leaflets that come with all your medicines to see if they can be taken with hormonal contraceptives.

**Some medicines can stop Binovum from working properly** – for example:

- **some medicines used to treat epilepsy**
- **certain antibiotics**
- **griseofulvin** (for fungal infections)
- **certain sedatives** (called ‘barbiturates’)
- **St. John’s Wort** (a herbal remedy)
- **certain laxatives** and **charcoal**

If you do need to take one of these medicines, Binovum may not be suitable for you or you may need to use extra contraception for a while. Your doctor, pharmacist or dentist can tell you if this is necessary and for how long.

**Binovum can also affect how well other medicines work.** For example, if you have diabetes, you may need to take more insulin or other anti-diabetic drugs while you take Binovum. Your doctor will tell you if this is necessary.

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## **2.6 Taking Binovum with food and drink**

There are no special instructions about food and drink while on Binovum.

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## **2.7 Pregnancy and breast-feeding**

**Do not start to use Binovum** if you are pregnant. If you think you might be pregnant while taking Binovum, do a pregnancy test to confirm that you are before you stop taking it.

**If you are breast-feeding**, your doctor or family planning nurse may advise you not to take Binovum. Talk to them about alternative contraception. Breast-feeding may not stop you getting pregnant.

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## **2.8 Driving and using machines**

Binovum has no known effect on the ability to drive or use machines.

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## **2.9 Binovum contains lactose**

If you have been told by your doctor that you have an intolerance to some sugars, contact your doctor before using Binovum.

# **3 Taking Binovum**

## **3.1 How to take it**

To prevent pregnancy, always take Binovum as described below. Check with your doctor or family planning nurse if you are not sure.

### **Take Binovum every day for 21 days**

Binovum comes in a strip of 21 pills, each marked with a day of the week.

- Take your pill at the same time every day.
- Start by taking a white pill marked with the correct day of the week.
- Follow the direction of the arrows on the strip. Take one white pill each day, until you have finished all of them.
- Then take a peach-coloured pill marked with the correct day of the week.

- Follow the direction of the arrows on the strip. Take one peach-coloured pill each day, until you have finished all of them.
- Swallow each pill whole, with water if necessary. Do not chew the pill.

### **Then have seven pill-free days**

After you have taken all 21 pills in the strip, you have seven days when you take no pills. So if you take the last pill of one pack on a Friday, you will take the first pill of your next pack on the Saturday of the following week.

Within a few days of taking the last pill from the strip, you should have a withdrawal bleed like a period. This bleed may not have finished when it is time to start your next strip of pills.

You don't need to use extra contraception during these seven pill-free days – as long as you have taken your pills correctly and start the next strip of pills on time.

### **Then start your next strip**

Start taking your next strip of Binovum after the seven pill-free days – even if you are still bleeding. Always start the new strip on time.

As long as you take Binovum correctly, you will always start each new strip on the same day of the week.

## **3.2 Starting Binovum**

### **As a new user or starting the Pill again after a break**

**Either** take your first Binovum pill up to and including day 5 of your next period (counting the first day of your period as day 1). This way, you will have contraceptive protection with your first pill.

**Or** start taking Binovum at any time, if you are sure you are not already pregnant. But then you must use extra contraception, such as condoms, until you have taken the first 7 pills correctly.

### **Changing to Binovum from another contraceptive**

If you are currently taking another Pill and you are taking it correctly, you can start Binovum at any time, if you are sure you are not already pregnant. There is no need to wait for your next period to start and you don't need extra contraception. If you are currently using a non-hormonal method and your period started more than 5 days ago, you must use extra contraception, such as condoms, until you have taken the first 7 pills correctly.

### **Starting Binovum after a miscarriage or abortion**

If you have had a miscarriage or an abortion, your doctor may tell you to start taking Binovum straight away. This means that you will have contraceptive protection with your first pill.

### **Contraception after having a baby**

If you have just had a baby, your doctor may tell you to start taking Binovum 21 days after the birth. This means that you will have contraceptive protection with your first pill.

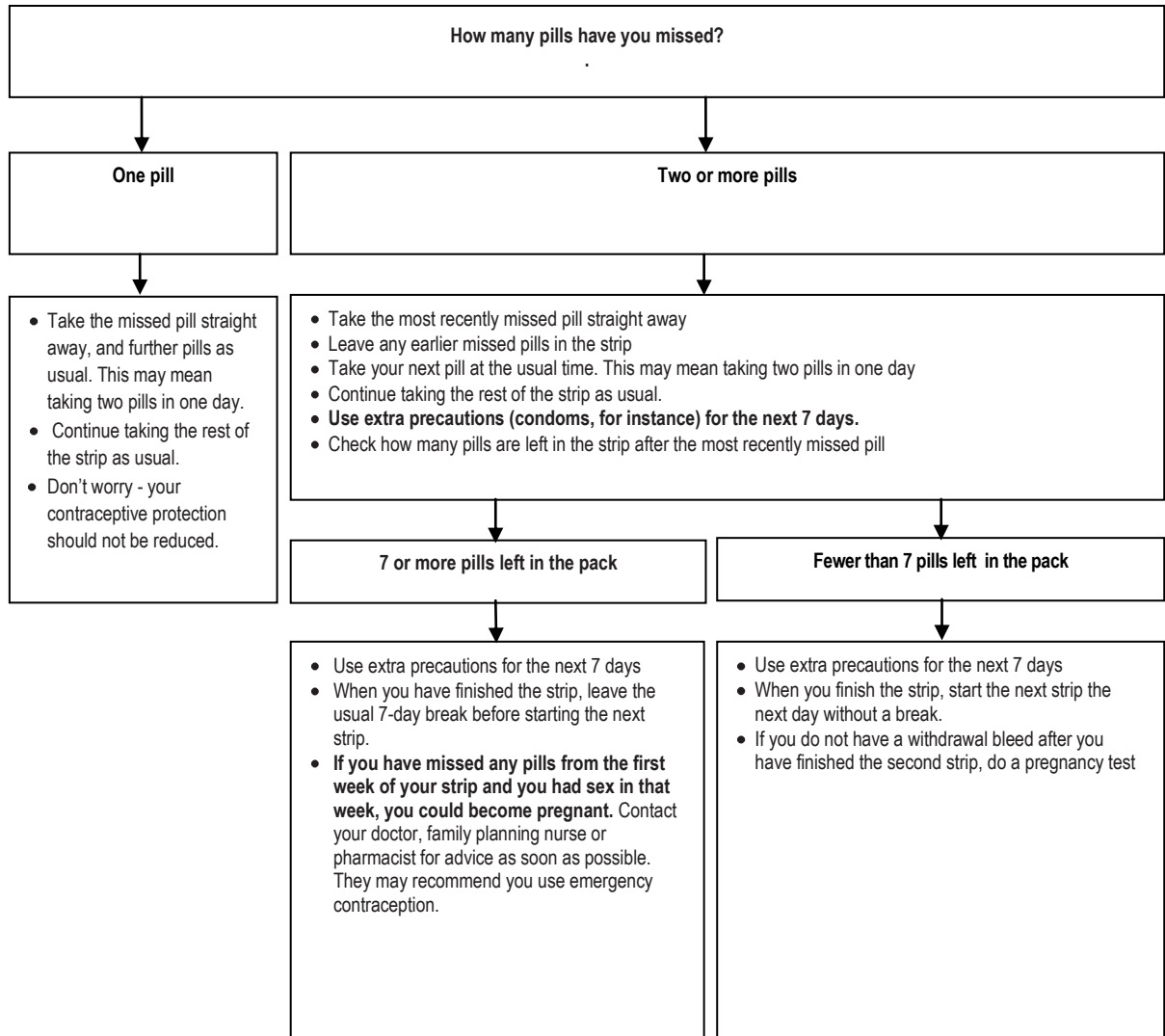
If you start Binovum after this, you must use extra contraception, such as condoms, until you have taken the first 7 pills correctly.

### 3.3 A missed pill

Missing pills or starting a strip late may make your pill less effective. The chance of pregnancy after missing pills depends on **when** pills are missed and **how many** pills are missed.

Missing one pill anywhere in your strip or starting a new strip one day late is **not** a problem. Missing **more than one** or starting a strip **more than one day late** may affect your contraceptive cover.

It is more risky to start a strip late and miss more than one pill.



If you have missed any of the pills in a strip, and you do not bleed in the first pill-free break, you may be pregnant. Contact your doctor or family planning clinic, or do a pregnancy test yourself.

**If you start a new strip of pills late**, or make your 'week off' longer than eight days, you may not be protected from pregnancy. If you had sex in the last seven days, ask your doctor, family planning nurse or pharmacist for advice. You may need to consider emergency contraception. You should also use extra contraception, such as a condom, for seven days.



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### **3.4 A lost pill**

If you lose a pill, just take a pill of the same colour from a spare strip. Then take all the other pills from your current strip as usual. You can then keep the opened spare strip in case you lose any more pills.

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### **3.5 If you are sick or have diarrhoea**

If you are sick or have very bad diarrhoea, your body may not get its usual dose of hormones from that pill. If you have been sick **within 2 hours of taking Binovum**, just take a pill of the same colour from a spare strip. Carry on taking your pills as normal if you can. You won't need to use extra contraception.

If you are still sick or have diarrhoea for **more than 1 day**, follow the instructions for a missed pill – see section 3.3, *A missed pill*.

→**Talk to your doctor if your stomach upset carries on or gets worse.** He or she may recommend another form of contraception.

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### **3.6 Missed a period – could you be pregnant?**

Occasionally, you may miss a withdrawal bleed. This could mean that you are pregnant, but that is very unlikely if you have taken your pills correctly. Start your next strip at the normal time. If you think that you might have put yourself at risk of pregnancy (for example, by missing pills or taking other medicines), or if you miss a second bleed, you should do a pregnancy test. You can buy these from the chemist or get a free test at your family planning clinic or doctor's surgery. If you are pregnant, stop taking Binovum and see your doctor.

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### **3.7 Taking more than one pill should not cause harm**

It is unlikely that taking more than one pill will do you any harm, but you may feel sick, vomit or have some vaginal bleeding. Talk to your doctor if you have any of these symptoms.

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### **3.8 You can delay a period**

If you want to delay having a period, finish the strip of pills you are taking. Start the next strip the next day without a break. Pill taking should then continue as usual.

When you use the second strip, you may have some unexpected bleeding or spotting on the days that you take the pill, but don't worry. Take the next strip after the usual 7 day break even if you are still bleeding or spotting.

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### **3.9 When you want to get pregnant**

If you are planning a baby, it's best to use another method of contraception after stopping Binovum until you have had a proper period. Your doctor or midwife relies on the date of your last natural period to tell you when your baby is due. However, it will not cause you or the baby any harm if you get pregnant straight away.

## 4 Possible side effects

Like all medicines, Binovum can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them.

→ **Tell your doctor, pharmacist or family planning nurse** if you are worried about any side effects which you think may be due to Binovum.

### 4.1 Serious side effects – see a doctor straight away

**Signs of a blood clot in a vein include:**

- **painful swelling in your leg**
- **sudden chest pain, difficulty breathing**
- **sudden changes in eyesight** (such as loss of vision or blurred vision).

**Signs of heart attack or stroke include:**

- a **severe headache or migraine** for the first time, or worse than normal
- **sudden changes in eyesight** (such as loss of vision or blurred vision)
- **sudden weakness or numbness** in one side or part of your body
- **slurred speech** or any other difficulties affecting your speech
- **sudden crushing pains in your chest** which may reach your left arm.

**Signs of breast cancer include:**

- **dimpling** of the skin
- **changes in the nipple**
- any **lumps** you can see or feel.

**Signs of severe liver problems include:**

- **severe pain** in your **upper abdomen**
- **yellow skin or eyes** (jaundice).

**Other serious side effects include:**

- **increased blood pressure**
- **hives (urticaria), swelling** of the face, lips, mouth, tongue or throat which may cause **difficulty in swallowing or breathing**. These may be signs of **allergy**.

→ **If you think you may have any of these, see a doctor straight away.**

You may need to stop taking Binovum.

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### 4.2 Other possible side effects – tell your doctor

**Very common side effects** (affects more than 1 in 10 patients)

- **Headache** (but if severe, unusual or long lasting, see a doctor as soon as possible)

**Common side effects** (affects more than 1 in 100 patients)

- **Swollen hands, ankles or feet**
- **Depression; feeling irritable**
- **Stomach cramps and bloating**

- **Acne**
- **Tender breasts**

**Uncommon side effects** (affects fewer than 1 in 100 patients)

- **Migraine** (see a doctor as soon as possible if this is your first migraine or it's worse than usual)
- **Painful or sore breasts**
- **Mood changes**
- **Rash**; patches of **darkened skin** (which may not disappear)
- **Hair thinning** (alopecia), **excessive hair growth**
- **Nausea, vomiting**
- **Changes in appetite**
- **Weight gain or loss**
- **Change in sex drive**
- **Vaginal thrush** (fungal infection)
- **No withdrawal periods**
- **Bleeding and spotting between your periods** for the first few months (though this usually stops when your body adjusts to Binovum) – see section 4.3, *Bleeding between periods should not last long*.
- **Contact lenses** may feel uncomfortable

**Frequency not known**

- **Raised blood sugar levels**
- **Gynaecological problems:**
  - Vaginal problems, such as more secretions
  - Heavy or unusual periods
  - Fibroids (disorder of the womb) may get worse
  - Delayed return to fertility after stopping the Pill
- **Cancer of the cervix** (vaginal discharge that smells and contains blood, unusual vaginal bleeding, pelvic pain, painful sex)
- **Breast problems** such as fuller breasts; producing a milky fluid from the nipples, reduced amount of breast milk (if breast feeding)
- **Oily skin**
- Small **red blisters or pimples** on the hands or arms, **red painful lumpy swellings on the legs**
- **Stomach ache**
- **Premenstrual syndrome (PMS)**
- **Gallstones**
- A problem with the nervous system (**chorea**).

→ **Tell your doctor, pharmacist or family planning nurse** if you are worried about any side effects which you think may be due to Binovum. Also tell them if any existing conditions get worse while you are taking Binovum.

**4.3 Bleeding between periods should not last long**

Usually you should only have a withdrawal bleed like a period during the seven pill-free days. However, a few women have a little unexpected bleeding or spotting while they are taking Binovum, especially during the first few months. Normally, this bleeding is nothing to worry about and will stop after a

day or two. Keep taking Binovum as usual. The problem should disappear after the first few strips.

You may also have unexpected bleeding if you are not taking your pills regularly, so try to take your pill at the same time every day. Also, unexpected bleeding can sometimes be caused by other medicines.

→ **Make an appointment to see your doctor** if you get breakthrough bleeding or spotting that:

- carries on for more than the first few months
- starts after you've been taking Binovum for a while
- carries on even after you've stopped taking Binovum.

## **5 How to store Binovum**

Keep all medicines out of the reach and sight of children.

Store Binovum below 25°C. Store it in the original package to protect it from light and moisture.

Do not use Binovum after the expiry date shown on the strip. The expiry date refers to the last day of that month.

Do not throw away any medicines down a drain or into a bin. Ask your pharmacist what to do with any medicines you do not want. This will help to protect the environment.

## **6 What is in Binovum and who makes it**

### **What is in Binovum**

Each box of Binovum contains three strips each containing 21 tablets.

Each strip of Binovum contains 7 white pills engraved 'C535' and 14 peach-coloured pills engraved 'C135'.

Each white pill contains 500 micrograms norethisterone and 35 micrograms ethinylestradiol.

Each peach-coloured pill contains 1 milligram norethisterone and 35 micrograms ethinylestradiol.

Binovum also contains the inactive ingredients: lactose (a type of sugar), magnesium stearate and pregelatinised starch. The coloured tablets also contain a dye called FD&C yellow No 6 (E110).

### **The company that holds the Product Licence for Binovum:**

Janssen-Cilag Ltd, 50-100 Holmers Farm Way, High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, HP12 4EG, UK

### **Binovum is made by:**

Janssen Pharmaceutica NV, Turnhoutseweg 30, B-2340 Beerse, Belgium

OR

McGregor Cory Ltd, Middleton Close, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX16 4RS, UK

**For information in large print, tape, CD or Braille, telephone  
0800 7318450.**

This leaflet was last approved in November 2010.