

# THE PILL OVER THE COUNTER: A SAFE OPTION

## INCREASING ACCESS

In a major breakthrough for women's health, 2024 is the first year that birth control pill users are able to buy the progestin-only pill, often called the "mini-pill," on store shelves without a prescription.

The COC, the most commonly used form of the Pill, is expected to also be sold on store shelves within a few years.

## OVER-THE-COUNTER (OTC) SAFETY

### **The pill's safety record spans 50-plus years.**

It is not toxic, not addictive and has no risk of overdose, thus meeting the FDA criteria for OTC access. Other OTC drugs carry more serious risks, such as NSAIDs, Sudafed, Tylenol, antihistamines and diet pills.

- Research has shown that **people can accurately identify if the pill is a safe option for them.** These facts are consistent with over-the-counter safety standards.
- **The pill meets over-the-counter health criteria.** The FDA's advisory committee voted unanimously in favor of over-the-counter status for the progestin-only pill.
- **Major medical groups**—including ACOG and American Academy of Pediatrics—have urged the FDA to consider making the over-the-counter pill available to all ages.

## REDUCING UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

**Increasing access by making the mini-pill available over the counter** will make it easier for people to physically and logistically access birth control in their communities.

**Almost half of the pregnancies in the U.S. are unintended.** Modeling suggests that removing financial and prescription barriers could reduce unintended pregnancies in the U.S. by up to 25 percent.

**Among the global population, 80 percent of people already have access to the pill over the counter.** Countries including the U.K. and the U.S. have been expanding access via pharmacists, and 2024 marks the first year that U.S. birth control pill users are able to buy the FDA-approved mini-pill on store shelves — without a prescription.