

WHICH BIRTH CONTROL METHOD IS RIGHT FOR ME?

There are many birth control options available today, and the choices can seem confusing.

This list can help you decide which method would best fit your lifestyle.

Hormonal Contraceptives work by preventing release of an egg from your ovaries into the uterus, and may also make the uterus an “unfriendly” environment for sperm. While most women know about the birth control pill, there are other hormonal birth control methods that are now available.

Nonhormonal Contraceptives prevent pregnancy by providing a barrier against sperm, or by interfering with sperm movement, or by creating an “unfriendly” environment for sperm. These methods do not use hormones, so they do not interfere with your natural reproductive cycle.

| | | How Effective Is this Method? | How Many Options Are Available? | How Often Do I Need To Use It? | Are There Interruptions With This Method | How Quickly Can I Get Pregnant If I Stop Using It? | Do I Need To See My Healthcare Professional To Start? | Do I Need A Prescription? | Does This Protect Against HIV and STDs? |
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| Hormonal Contraceptives | The Patch | 99% effective | There is only 1 contraceptive patch | The patch is applied once a week for 3 weeks. During week 4 no patch is used | There are no interruptions with this method | Once stopped, it may take a few cycles before you can become pregnant | You need to learn how to apply the Patch correctly | Yes | No |
| | Oral Contraceptive (The Pill) | 99% effective | There are a variety of pills available in different doses | You should take your pill every day, at approximately the same time each day | There are no interruptions with this method | Once stopped, it may take a few cycles before you can become pregnant | You may need instructions on the correct way to take your pills | Yes | No |
| | Contraceptive Injections | 99% effective | There are 2 options currently available: a monthly injection & an injection that is given every 3 months | You receive an injection either monthly or every 3 months | There are no interruptions with this method | Ovulation may be delayed up to a year | A healthcare professional administers the injection | Yes | No |
| | Progestin-Releasing Intrauterine Device (IUD) | 99% effective | There is 1 hormone-releasing IUD currently available | The suggested length of use is 5 years or less | There are no interruptions with this method | Once removed, fertility can return within a year | Your healthcare professional inserts and removes the IUD | Yes | No |
| | Vaginal Ring | 99% effective | There is only 1 vaginal ring | Each month, the vaginal ring is inserted into the vagina and left in place for 3 weeks. During week 4, you do not wear the ring | There are no interruptions with this method | Once stopped, it may take a few cycles before you can become pregnant | You need to learn how to insert and remove the vaginal ring | Yes | No |

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| Non-Hormonal Contraceptives | Male Condom | 97% effective | There are a variety of styles, sizes, colors, materials, and textures | A new one must be used every time you have sex | Must be applied when the penis is erect. May cause a slight interruption before sex | Without this device, there is no protection against pregnancy | Tell your healthcare professional that you plan to use condoms | No | Yes |
| | Female Condom | 95% effective | There is 1 female condom currently available | A new one must be used every time you have sex | A female condom can be inserted up to 8 hours before sex | Without this device, there is no protection against pregnancy | Tell your healthcare professional that you plan to use a female condom | No | Unless the female condom slips out of place or is torn, it should provide protection against STD exposure comparable to that of male condoms |
| | Intrauterine Device (IUD) | 99% effective | There is 1 copper-T IUD currently available | Once inserted in the uterus, it can be left in place for up to 10 years | There is no interruptions with this method | Once removed, fertility can return within about 1 month | Your healthcare professional inserts and removes the IUD | Yes | No |
| | Spermicides | 94% effective-use with a vaginal barrier increases effectiveness | There are a variety of spermicides available in foams, jellies, creams, and vaginal suppositories | Must be used every time you have sex | Must be inserted no more than 1 hour before sex | Without this device, there is no protection against pregnancy | Tell your healthcare professional. You may be advised to use an additional contraceptive method | No | No |
| VAGINAL BARRIERS | Diaphragm | 94% effective | There are a variety of sizes available | Must be used every time you have sex (and fresh spermicide must be applied each time) | The diaphragm can be inserted 6 to 8 hours before sex | Without this device, there is no protection against pregnancy | You need to be fitted and must learn how to use the diaphragm | Yes | Diaphragms do not protect against HIV (AIDS). There is a mild reduction in the risk of some STDs. |
| | Cervical Cap | 84% effective in women who have had a child (91% in those who have not) | There are a variety of sizes available | Must be used every time you have sex (and spermicide must be applied when inserted) | The cervical cap provides continuous protection for up to 48 hours | Without this device, there is no protection against pregnancy | You need to be fitted and must learn how to use the cervical cap | Yes | No |
| PERMANENT METHODS | Surgical Sterilization | Greater than 99% effective | For women, there is a tubal ligation (having your tubes "tied"; for men, there is a vasectomy | These procedures are permanent and irreversible | There are no interruptions with this method | You will no longer be able to get pregnant | These surgical procedures are performed by a healthcare professional | Physician recommended | No |
| | How Effective Is this Method? | How Many Options Are Available? | How Often Do I Need To Use It? | Are There Interruptions With This Method | How Quickly Can I Get Pregnant If I Stop Using It? | Do I Need To See My Healthcare Professional To Start? | Do I Need A Prescription? | Does This Protect Against HIV and STDs? | How Effective Is this Method? |