








# Which birth control method is right for me?

Note: This is meant to be used as a general guide to let you know of the different birth control options available. Please consult your physician or family planning service provider to get the full details and discuss which method is right for you.

Highlighted items are Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs), also known as Long Term Reversible Contraceptives (LTRCs).






## Hormonal Contraceptives

Hormonal contraceptives work by preventing release of an egg from your ovaries into the uterus. They also create an environment that interferes with sperm movement or impairs sperm function.

|  |   | Description  | How effective is this method (with perfect use)? | How often do I need to use it?   | 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 STIs?! |
|--|---|--|--|--|---|--|---------------------------|--|
|   | Etonogestrel Implant                          | A matchstick-sized capsule implanted in a woman's upper arm that releases a steady dose of hormones              | 99.9% effective                                  | Implants provide birth control for up to 3 years   | Once removed, fertility can return within days.                       | Yes -- a healthcare professional inserts and removes the implant   | Yes                       | No                                       |
|   | Progestin-Releasing Intrauterine Device (IUD) | A small device placed in the uterus by a healthcare professional.  | 99% effective                                    | The suggested length of use is 5 years or less   | Once removed, fertility can return within a year                      | Yes -- a healthcare professional inserts and removes the IUD   | Yes                       | No                                       |
|   | Contraceptive Patch                           | A small thin patch that delivers a steady flow of hormones through the skin and into the bloodstream over 7 days | 99% effective                                    | The patch is applied once a week for 3 weeks. During Week 4, no patch is used                              | Once stopped, it may take a few cycles before you can become pregnant | Yes -- you need to learn how to apply the patch correctly  | Yes                       | No                                       |
|   | Contraceptive Injections                      | A type of hormonal birth control that is given as an injection (a shot) in your arm, thigh, or buttock           | 99% effective                                    | You receive an injection either monthly or every 3 months  | Ovulation may be delayed for up to a year                             | Yes -- a healthcare professional administers the injection   | Yes                       | No                                       |
|   | Vaginal Ring                                  | The vaginal ring is inserted into the vagina and releases hormones over a 3-week period.                         | 99% effective                                    | Each month, the vaginal ring is inserted and left in place for 3 weeks. During Week 4, the ring is removed | Once stopped, it may take a few cycles before you can become pregnant | Yes -- you need to learn how to insert and remove the vaginal ring   | Yes                       | No                                       |
|   | Oral Contraceptive (The Pill)                 | Oral contraceptives are small tablets taken daily  | 95 to 99% effective                              | You should take the pill at approximately the same time every day  | Once stopped, it may take a few cycles before you can become pregnant | Yes -- because there are many options available, you need to consult your healthcare professional to select the right one for you                              | Yes                       | No                                       |
|  | Emergency Contraceptive Pill (levonorgestral) | A small tablet taken within 72 hours of unprotected sex or contraceptive failure                                 | 89% effective, if taken within 72 hours          | Use within 72 hours of unprotected sex or contraceptive failure  | Without this pill, there is no protection against pregnancy           | If you are under 18, you need a prescription from a healthcare professional. If you are over 18, it can be purchased over the counter, without a prescription. | If under 18, yes          | No                                       |

## Nonhormonal Contraceptives

Nonhormonal contraceptives prevent pregnancy by providing a barrier against sperm, or by creating an environment that interferes with sperm movement or impairs sperm function. These methods do not use hormones, so they do not interfere with your natural menstrual cycle.

|   |   | Description   | How effective is this method (with perfect use)?                                | How often do I need to use it?   | 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 STIs?! |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|--|---------------------------|--|
|  | Intrauterine Device (containing copper) | A small device placed in the uterus by a physician or other healthcare professional.  | 99% effective   | Once inserted in the uterus, it can be left in place for 1 to 10 years   | Once removed, fertility can return in about 1 month           | Yes -- your healthcare professional inserts and removes the IUD  | Yes                       | No                                       |
|  | Male Condom                             | A tubelike sheath fitted over the penis preventing sperm from entering the uterus.  | 87 to 97% effective   | A new condom must be used every time you have sex  | Without this device, there is no protection against pregnancy | No -- however, it is recommended you tell your healthcare professional that you use condoms                    | No                        | Yes                                      |
|  | Diaphragm                               | A diaphragm is a soft rubber, latex, or silicone cup that covers the cervix and stops sperm from entering the cervical canal. | 80 to 94% effective   | Must be used every time you have sex (and fresh spermicide must be applied each time); can be inserted 6 to 8 hours before intercourse | Without this device, there is no protection against pregnancy | Yes -- you need to be fitted and must learn how to use the diaphragm   | Yes                       | No                                       |
|  | Female Condom                           | A lubricated plastic sheath placed in the vagina so that it covers the cervix, preventing sperm from entering the uterus.     | 79 to 95% effective   | A new condom must be used every time you have sex; can be inserted up to 8 hours before intercourse                                    | Without this device, there is no protection against pregnancy | No -- however, it is recommended you tell your healthcare professional that you use condoms                    | No                        | Yes                                      |
|  | Spermicides                             | Chemical foam, cream, jelly, film, or suppository that is inserted into the vagina. They kill sperm upon contact.             | 74 to 94% effective -- using with a vaginal barrier will increase effectiveness | Must be used every time you have sex; can be inserted no more than 1 hour before intercourse   | Without this device, there is no protection against pregnancy | No -- however, tell your healthcare professional. You may be advised to use an additional contraceptive method | No                        | No                                       |

## A Note about Natural Family Planning

Natural family planning is the practice of avoiding intercourse during a woman's "fertile window", the portion of her menstrual cycle when she is most likely to become pregnant. Talk with your healthcare professional to obtain more information about the different methods of natural family planning. Please know that while it is more effective than no birth control at all, natural family planning has a high failure rate.

\*HIV = Human Immunodeficiency Virus; STI = Sexually Transmitted Infection

Source: *Contraceptive Technology*, Eighteenth Revised Edition; and [www.orthowomenshealth.com](http://www.orthowomenshealth.com)