








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? ¹
	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 (levonorgestrel) 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? ¹
	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.

¹HIV = Human Immunodeficiency Virus; STI = Sexually Transmitted Infection

Source: *Contraceptive Technology*, Eighteenth Revised Edition; and www.orthowomenshealth.com

