







Quick Guide to Birth Control

Always use condoms to protect yourself from HIV/STDs








| Method (Brand) | How long it works | What you have to do | It may be right for you if you want | How you get or use it | How effective it usually is | Possible side effects | |
|--|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| Highly Effective Birth Control Intrauterine Device (ParaGard, Mirena)  | 1-10 years, taken out at any time | Go to your provider to have a soft plastic t-shaped device inserted into your uterus. Your provider can take it out for you at any time. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prevent pregnancy for one or more years Ease of use, no maintenance Reduced or no periods (Mirena) Low to no hormones | Your provider inserts and removes the IUD during an office visit. | +99% Less than 1 in 100 women will get pregnant using this method this year | With the Mirena, irregular bleeding is common, especially in the first few months. Over time, many women stop having any menstrual bleeding. Cramps and backaches are common. With the copper IUD (ParaGard), increased period flow is common. This usually improves within the first 3-6 months. Some cramping may occur during insertion, but patients can't usually notice the IUD after a few minutes. Note: Once the IUD is in place, you don't have to do anything for birth control. Men cannot feel the strings of the IUD during intercourse. | |
| | Implant (Implanon, Nexplanon)  | 1-3 years, taken out at any time | Go to your provider to have a soft plastic match-sized rod inserted under the skin of your arm. Your provider can take it out for you at any time. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prevent pregnancy for one or more years Ease of use, no maintenance Low hormones | Your provider inserts and removes the implant during an office visit. | +99% Less than 1 in 100 women will get pregnant using this method this year | Irregular bleeding such as spotting in between periods or longer/heavier periods. Some women have irregular bleeding the whole time the implant is in. Some women have no periods at all for a while. Acne, change in appetite, and change in sex drive are also common. Note: Once the Implant is in place, you don't have to do anything for birth control |
| Effective Birth Control Shot (Depo-Provera)  | 12 weeks | Go to your provider every 12 weeks for an injection. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prevent pregnancy for 12 weeks | Your provider gives the injection during an office visit. | 94% 6 in 100 women will get pregnant using this method this year | Irregular bleeding, especially for the first 6-12 months. This could mean longer/heavier periods or spotting in between periods. Over time, your menstrual period may stop completely when using the shot. Changes in appetite or weight gain are also common. Some women gain around 5 pounds in the first year, while others gain nothing. | |
| | Vaginal Ring (NuvaRing)  | 3 weeks | Insert a new ring at home every 3 weeks. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prevent pregnancy for 3 weeks | You need a prescription, and you put it in at home. | 91% 9 in 100 women will get pregnant using this method this year | Bleeding in between periods, breast tenderness (usually improves within a few weeks), nausea and vomiting (usually improves within a few weeks), increased vaginal discharge, irritation, or infection Note: With this birth control, there is also a very rare risk of developing a blood clot in the veins or lungs (DVT/PE). This can be life-threatening. You must remember to change your ring every month. |
| | Patch (Ortho Evra)  | 1 week | Apply a new patch every week. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prevent pregnancy for 1 week | You need a prescription, and you stick it on at home. | 91% 9 in 100 women will get pregnant using this method this year | Bleeding in between periods, breast tenderness (usually improves within a few weeks), nausea and vomiting (usually improves within a few weeks), skin irritation where you placed the patch. Note: With this birth control, there is also a very rare risk of developing a blood clot in the veins or lungs (DVT/PE). This can be life-threatening. You must remember to change your patch every month. |
| | Pill (many brands)  | 1 day | Take a pill at the same time every day. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To prevent pregnancy for 1 day | You need a prescription, and take it at home. | 91% 9 in 100 women will get pregnant using this method this year | Bleeding in between periods, breast tenderness (usually improves within a few weeks), nausea and vomiting (usually improves within a few weeks) Note: You must remember to take your pill at the same time every day. With this birth control, there is also a very rare risk of developing a blood clot in the veins or lungs (DVT/PE). This can be life-threatening. |

DON'T SEE WHAT YOU WANT? ASK YOUR PROVIDER FOR ADDITIONAL METHODS.
 Did you have unprotected sex in the last five days? Talk to your provider about Emergency Contraception.



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| AS NEEDED |  Diaphragm | 1 time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An out of sight method (can be inserted up to 6 hours before sex) | Provider does the initial fitting, then gives a prescription for the right size. You put in at home. | 88% 12 in 100 women will get pregnant using this method this year | Can cause vaginal irritation Note: You have to use it every time you have sex. Some women have a hard time inserting or removing it. It can be pushed out of place by large penises, heavy thrusting or certain sexual positions. Spermicide is used along with this method. |
| |  Male condom (Latex, Polyurethane) | 1 time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective STD/HIV protection No prescription or doctor's visit | Drugstores and supermarkets. No prescription needed. You put on at home. | 82% 18 in 100 women will get pregnant using this method this year | Note: You have to use a new condom each time you have sex. |
| |  Female condom (Polyurethane) | 1 time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective STD/HIV protection No prescription or doctor's visit | Drugstores and supermarkets. No prescription needed. You put on at home. | 79% 21 in 100 women will get pregnant using this method this year | Note: You have to use a new condom each time you have sex. |
| | Withdrawal | 1 time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ease of use, no maintenance No prescription or doctor's visit | The man pulls away before ejaculation to keep sperm out of the vagina. | 78% 27 in 100 women will get pregnant using this method this year | Note: Withdrawal has a very high rate of failure (you getting pregnant). A woman can get pregnant even if her partner pulls out before ejaculating. |
| |  Sponge (Today Sponge) | 1 time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No prescription or doctor's visit An out of sight method (can be inserted up to 24 hours before sex) | Drugstores and supermarkets. No prescription needed, and you put in at home. | 76-88% 12-24 in 100 women will get pregnant using this method this year | Can cause vaginal irritation, Some women are allergic to sulfa drugs, polyurethane, or spermicide and shouldn't use the sponge. May make sex messier or drier Note: You have to use it every time you have sex. Some women have a hard time inserting or removing it. It can be pushed out of place by large penises, heavy thrusting or certain sexual positions. |
| |  Fertility Awareness/ Natural Family Planning | Daily tracking is required to use this correctly. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No prescription or doctor's visit | Supplies are available online or from clinics. | 76-88% 24 in 100 women will get pregnant using this method this year | Failure / unexpected pregnancy. Note: To use NFP reliably, you need to learn how to do the method (including attending class), you have to keep track of your menstrual periods monthly, and you have to abstain or use condoms during your fertile periods. NFP doesn't work well if you've used hormonal birth control recently, or if you have irregular menstrual periods. |
| |  Spermicide (VCF) | 1 time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No prescription or doctor's visit | Drugstores and supermarkets. No prescription needed, and you use at home. | 72% 29 in 100 women will get pregnant using this method this year | Spermicide can be messy and can cause vaginal irritation (especially if you use it more than once per day). Some people are allergic to spermicides. Note: Vaginal irritation may increase risk for getting certain types of sexually transmitted infections, like HIV. |
|  Cervical Cap (FemCap) | 1 time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No prescription or doctor's visit An out of sight method (can be inserted up to 6 hours before sex) | Provider does the initial fitting, then gives a prescription for the right size. You put in at home. | 71-86% 29 in 100 women will get pregnant using this method this year | Can cause vaginal irritation, Some women wind up getting frequent urinary tract infections Note: You have to use it every time you have sex. Some women have a hard time inserting or removing it. Some people are allergic to silicone or to the spermicide. It can be pushed out of place by large penises, heavy thrusting or certain sexual positions. | |
| | Abstinence | Every time | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To avoid sexual activity | Practice continuous abstinence. | n/a | |
| PERMANENT | Tubal Ligation | Permanent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent birth control | Surgical operation at a hospital or clinic. | +99% Less than 1 in 100 women will get pregnant using this method this year | Note: This is permanent sterilization and can not be reversed. After certain types of sterilization procedures (through the cervix), you need to have a test a few months after the surgery to make sure the sterilization worked. Once this test shows the surgery worked, you can rely on the sterilization. |
| | Vasectomy | Permanent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent birth control | Surgical operation at a hospital or clinic. | +99% Less than 1 in 100 women will get pregnant using this method this year | Note: This is permanent sterilization and can not be reversed. After vasectomy, men need to have a test a few months after surgery to make sure the vasectomy worked. Once this shows the surgery worked, you can rely on the vasectomy. |