

Choosing a Method of Birth Control

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In comparing your choices, decide what matters most to you in a method of birth control. Share your concerns with your health care provider, and get more information if you need it.

To learn more about birth control methods, ask your health care provider. Make sure you have all the information you need to make the right choice and use your birth control correctly.

Method	Effectiveness	Benefits	Risks	Side Effects
Oral Contraceptive (the pill)	99.6% if taken correctly 97% progestin only if taken correctly	-less cramping -less bleeding -improves acne -monthly period	-increased risk of hear attack and stroke (Smoking doubles risk) -Blood clots in legs or lungs -Gallbladder disease (esp. with long use) -decreased protection when taken with certain drugs	-head aches -visual problems -breast tenderness -mood changes -depression
EVRA (the patch)	99% when used correctly	-convenient -monthly period	-increased risk of hear attack and stroke (Smoking doubles risk) -Blood clots in legs or lungs -Gallbladder disease (esp. with long use) -decreased protection when taken with certain drugs -may not be effective in women more than 198 lbs	-breast tenderness -headache -application site reaction -nausea -menstrual cramps -abdominal pain
Paraguard IUD	99.2%	-no hormones -convenient -can last up to 10 years	-perforation of uterus -increased chance of infection in tubes and uterus if infected with an STD -allergy to copper	-increased menstrual bleeding and cramping -possible anemia due to increased menstrual flow
Depo Provera (injection)	99% if injections are every 12 weeks	-convenient -usually less bleeding	-possible drug interactions -long term use contributes to bone loss	-weight gain -possibly no periods -head aches -depression -irregular periods
Diaphragm with contraceptive jelly	80-95% depending on use	-no hormones -rare side effects -no risks	-none	-rare allergy to rubber -rare allergy to contraceptive jelly
Condoms and/or foam	60-96% depending on use	-no prescription needed -STD infection decreased	-none	-rare allergy to rubber -rare allergy to foam
Mirena IUD	99.9%	-convenient -can last up to 5 years	-perforation of uterus -increased chance of infection in tubes and uterus if infected with an STD	-mood changes -acne -nausea -headache -breast tenderness -irregular periods

Natural Family Planning

How Does Natural Family Planning Work?

Natural family planning is based on the fact that fertilization is most likely to occur just before, during and just after ovulation. By carefully monitoring yourself daily, you may be able to determine when you are ovulating—and thus predict when you are most fertile. At those times you can practice birth control by just avoiding intercourse. While more effective than no birth control at all, natural family planning has a high failure rate—because even the most regular cycle can vary from month to month. It is perhaps the least effective birth control method. Ask your doctor or health care professional if you are an appropriate candidate. Consider natural family planning only if you choose not to use a birth control device and if you are willing to stick to a time consuming schedule of readings for several months.

Sexual Abstinence

Sexual abstinence is a choice to limit your sexual activity. This choice is usually made for a specific reason. The reason may be moral, religious, legal or for health and safety. Everyone has a different definition of sexual abstinence. The most common meaning of sexual abstinence is not having sexual intercourse, vaginal or anal. It is important to discuss with your partner what abstinence means to you, especially if you are developing a new relationship. Avoiding premature sexual relationships may help you avoid painful emotional situations for which you may not yet be prepared. You can also avoid unwanted pregnancy and potentially damaging or life threatening diseases. If you are unsure or decide against abstinence, make sure you talk about birth control methods with your health care provider.

Permanent Sterilization

Vasectomy

Vasectomy is a safe and easy operation. The tubes in the man's scrotum or sac, which carry the sperm, are tied off. A vasectomy is a **PERMANENT** form of birth control since it is not easily reversed. It's performed on men who are certain they so not want any more children. It is a very effective method of birth control with a failure rate of only 1 in 1000 operations.

Tubal Ligation

Tubal ligation is a simple operation for tying a woman's tubes in her abdomen that lead from her ovaries to her uterus or womb. Tubal ligation is performed on women who are certain that they do not want any more children. It is a **PERMANENT** method of birth control which means that after the operation the woman can never have another child. It is a very effective method of birth control with a failure rate of only 2-5 in 1000 operations.

Material referenced from:

The Choice is Yours by Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceuticals 1998

Womens Health Talk Ross Pediatrics 1997

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