

BIRTH CONTROL OPTIONS

Implanon

Implanon is 99% effective. It is a flexible plastic rod the size of a matchstick that is put under the skin of your arm in a doctor's office. Implanon uses hormones similar to those produced by your body to prevent ovulation. It also works by thickening the cervical mucus, which acts as a barrier to prevent sperm from fertilizing an egg. Implanon works for up to three years. At the end of the third year, it must be removed and can be replaced with a new Implanon if you are not ready to get pregnant. A health care professional must prescribe Implanon. Implanon does not provide protection against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Birth Control Patch

The birth control patch is 99% effective. It is applied to the skin once a week for three weeks out of the month. The patch uses hormones similar to those produced by a woman's body to prevent ovulation. Once the patch method is stopped, it is possible to get pregnant after a few menstrual cycles. A health care professional must prescribe the patch and can provide instructions on how to use it. The birth control patch does not provide protection against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Birth Control Pill

The pill is 99% effective when used properly (it should be taken at the same time every day). There are a variety of pills available. The pill uses hormones similar to those produced by a woman's body to prevent ovulation. Once a patient stops taking the pill, it may be possible to get pregnant after a few cycles. The pill requires a prescription from a health care provider who can also provide instructions on proper use. The birth control pill does not provide protection against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Depo Provera Shot

This method is 99% effective. An injection is given every three months. The Depo Provera shot uses a hormone similar to that produced by a woman's body to prevent ovulation. The shot is administered by a health care professional. With this method, ovulation may be interrupted for up to a year. Menstrual cycles may also be affected by contraceptive injections. Birth control injections do not provide protection against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Intrauterine Device (IUD)

This method is also 99% effective. The IUD is inserted into a woman's uterus by a health care professional. There are two types of IUDs. One releases hormones, and the other does not. The hormone-releasing IUD may be used for five years or less, while the IUD that does not release hormones may be used for up to ten years. Once the hormone-releasing IUD is removed, fertility can return within a year, while fertility can return within one month upon removal of the other IUD. The IUD is recommended for women who have carried a full-term pregnancy and who are in a monogamous relationship. The IUD does not provide protection against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Male Condom

This method is 97% effective and does provide protection against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The condom comes in a variety of sizes, styles, and materials – latex, polyurethane, and lambskin. Lambskin condoms, however, will not provide protection against HIV and other STIs and provide minimal protection against unwanted pregnancy. You must use a new condom each time you have sex, and must be put on when the penis is erect. You should tell your health care professional if this is the method of birth control you plan to use, and he or she can tell you more about its proper use.

Vaginal Ring

The vaginal ring is 99% effective when used properly. The ring is inserted into the vagina and left in place for three weeks out of the month. It is removed for the fourth week. It releases hormones similar to those produced by a woman's body to prevent ovulation. Fertility may return after a few cycles once this method is discontinued. A health care professional can provide instruction on the proper use of this method, and it does require a prescription. The vaginal ring does not provide protection against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Female Condom

The female condom is effective 95% of the time. It is made out of polyurethane, a safe alternative for people with latex sensitivity or allergies. A new one must be used every time you have sex. It can be inserted up to eight hours before intercourse, and does provide protection against HIV and other STIs. You should let your health care professional know if this is the birth control method you plan to use, and it may be helpful to also discuss its proper use. There is currently only one type of female condom on the market.

Spermicides

Spermicides are 94% effective, and their effectiveness is increased when used with a barrier method, such as a condom or a diaphragm. They work by killing sperm on contact. There are a variety of types of spermicides available. They must be used every time you have sex, and they must be inserted no more than one hour before sex. You should notify your health care professional that this is the method of birth control you are planning to use. He or she may advise you to use another method together with spermicides. Spermicides do not require a prescription. Using the spermicide nonoxynol-9 may irritate tissue around the vagina and anus, and can increase the risk of HIV and other STIs.

Diaphragm

A diaphragm is a vaginal barrier method of birth control that is 94% effective. It must be used every time you have sex and must be used with a spermicide (which must be applied each time). The diaphragm can be inserted up to eight hours before sex. It must be fitted and prescribed by a health care professional who will also provide instruction on the diaphragm's proper use. The diaphragm does not provide protection against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Cervical Cap

The cervical cap is 84% effective for women who have already had a child and is 91% effective for women who have not. This method must be used each time you have sex and needs to be fitted by a health care professional. The device can be inserted up to 48 hours before sex and must be used with a spermicide. The cervical cap does not provide protection against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Surgical Sterilization (Tubal Ligation & Vasectomy)

These methods of birth control are over 99% effective and are permanent. Once a doctor performs these procedures, you will no longer be able to get pregnant or to impregnate someone. These methods do not protect against STIs.

Abstinence

Abstinence is the only 100% effective method of preventing unwanted pregnancy, HIV, and other STIs. This definition of abstinence includes abstinence from all sexual contact, including oral, vaginal, and anal intercourse.

Emergency Birth Control

Emergency contraception (EC) can prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex if taken within 120 hours of intercourse. Emergency contraception (formerly known as the "morning-after pill") are birth control pills and are usually given in one or two doses. It is important to take EC as soon as possible after unprotected sex-effectiveness is increased when taken within 72 hours after intercourse. Effectiveness ranges from 75-89%. Emergency contraception requires a prescription from a health care provider. EC does not provide protection from HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STI).