

CONTRACEPTION AND PREGNANCY

What are the different forms of birth control and how do I use them?

KEY WORDS 

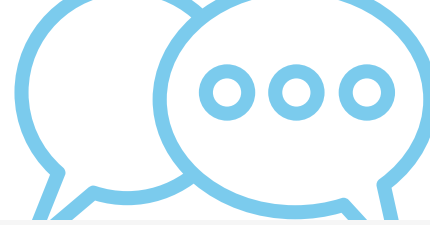
condoms | birth control | safe sex | contraception



When it comes to birth control, there are several options to choose from, each with its own unique way of preventing pregnancy and the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Let's take a look:

• Condoms

Condoms are handy little helpers that act as a barrier by preventing sperm from reaching the egg. Just remember: use a new one each time you have sex (vaginal, oral or anal) and follow the instructions carefully.



- **Birth control pills**

These pills are taken daily and contain hormones to stop ovulation. Ovulation marks the most fertile phase of the menstrual cycle (about 2 weeks in) when an egg is released from the ovaries. It's important to take birth control pills at the same time every day, but once you start, it becomes a habit pretty quickly! Some young women may find that birth control pills negatively affect their moods, so this method should be discussed in detail with a doctor.

- **Contraceptive implants**

These are tiny rods inserted under the skin of your arm. They work by releasing hormones to prevent pregnancy. In terms of their success rate, they're super effective and last for several years, so they don't require constantly buying new ones like condoms or refilling prescriptions like for birth control pills.

- **Intrauterine devices (IUDs)**

These are small, T-shaped devices placed by a doctor inside the uterus to prevent pregnancy. They come in hormonal and non-hormonal options and can last for years. Insertion can range from mildly painful to quite painful for about 1-2 mins. You should also be aware of the post-insertion symptoms: you may experience cramping, mild bleeding, or dizziness after the procedure.



- **Birth control patch**

This is a patch that you stick on your skin once a week for three weeks, then take a break for a week. It releases hormones to stop ovulation and is easy to use. You can put the patch on your buttock, upper outer arm, lower abdomen or upper body. Don't put it on your breasts or in a place where it can be rubbed.

- **Birth control shot**

This is a shot you can get injected into your arm or buttocks from your healthcare provider every three months. It works by stopping the egg from being released from the ovary ie. stopping ovulation from occurring.

When choosing the best form of birth control for you, remember to do your research and weigh the pros and cons in terms of: effectiveness, cost, comfort, and availability. Think about what works best for you and your lifestyle. And, most importantly, before making a final decision: talk to your healthcare provider to get the support you need to make the right choice.



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