



BIRTH CONTROL GUIDE

If you do not want to get pregnant, there are many birth control options to choose from. No one product is best for everyone. Some methods are more effective than others at preventing pregnancy. Check the pregnancy rates on this chart to get an idea of how effective the product is at preventing pregnancy. The pregnancy rates tell you the number of pregnancies expected per 100 women during the first year of typical use. Typical use shows how effective the different methods are during actual use (including sometimes using a method in a way that is not correct or not consistent). The only sure way to avoid pregnancy is not to have any sexual contact. Talk to your healthcare provider about the best method for you.

Most Effective

Least Effective

FDA-Approved Methods	Number of pregnancies expected (per 100 Women)*	Use	Some Risks or Side Effects*	
This chart does not list all of the risks and side effects for each product.				
Sterilization Surgery for Women	Less than 1	Onetime procedure. Permanent.	Pain Bleeding Infection or other complications after surgery	
Sterilization Implant for Women	Less than 1	Onetime procedure. Permanent.	Pain/ cramping Pelvic or back discomfort Vaginal bleeding	
Sterilization Surgery for Men	Less than 1	Onetime procedure. Permanent.	Pain Bleeding Infection	
IUD Copper	Less than 1	Inserted by a healthcare provider. Lasts up to 10 years.	Cramps Heavier, longer periods Spotting between periods	
IUD with Progestin	Less than 1	Inserted by a healthcare provider. Lasts up to 3-5 years, depending on the type.	Irregular bleeding No periods (amenorrhea) Abdominal/pelvic pain	
Implantable Rod	Less than 1	Inserted by a healthcare provider. Lasts up to 3 years.	Menstrual Changes Weight gain Acne	Mood swings or depressed mood Headache
Shot/ Injection	6	Need a shot every 3 months.	Loss of bone density Irregular bleeding/ Bleeding between periods Headaches Nervousness Abdominal discomfort	
Oral Contraceptives "The Pill" (Combined Pill)	9	Must swallow a pill every day.	Spotting/ bleeding between periods Nausea Breast tenderness Headache	
Oral Contraceptives "The Pill" (Extended/Continuous Use Combined Pill)	9	Must swallow a pill every day.	Spotting/ bleeding between periods Nausea Breast tenderness Headache	
Oral Contraceptives "The Mini Pill" (Progestin Only)	9	Must swallow a pill at the same time every day.	Spotting/ bleeding between periods Nausea Breast tenderness Headache	
Patch	9	Put on a new patch each week for 3 weeks (21 total days). Don't put on a patch during the fourth week.	Spotting or bleeding between menstrual periods Nausea Breast tenderness Skin irritation	
Vaginal Contraceptive Ring	9	Put the ring into the vagina yourself. Keep the ring in your vagina for 3 weeks and then take it out for one week.	Vaginal discharge, discomfort in the vagina, and mild irritation. Headache Nausea	
Diaphragm with Spermicide	12	Must use every time you have sex.	Irritation Allergic reactions Urinary tract infection	
Sponge with Spermicide	12-24	Must use every time you have sex.	Irritation	
Cervical Cap with Spermicide	17-23	Must use every time you have sex.	Irritation Allergic reactions Abnormal Pap test	
Male Condom	18	Must use every time you have sex. Provides protection against some STDs.	Irritation Allergic reactions	
Female Condom	21	Must use every time you have sex. Provides protection against some STDs.	Discomfort or pain during insertion or sex. Burning sensation, rash or itching	
Spermicide Alone	28	Must use every time you have sex.	Irritation Allergic reactions Urinary tract infection	
OTHER CONTRACEPTION				
Emergency Contraceptives (EC):				
May be used if you did not use birth control or if your regular birth control fails (such as a condom breaks). It should not be used as a regular form of birth control. Emergency contraception prevents about 55 - 85% of predicted pregnancies.				
Levonorgestrel 1.5 mg (1 pill) Levonorgestrel .75 mg (2 pills)	7 out of every 8 women who would have gotten pregnant will not become pregnant after taking this EC.	Swallow the pills as soon as possible within 3 days after having unprotected sex.	Menstrual changes Headache Dizziness Breast pain Lower stomach (abdominal) pain	
Ulipristal Acetate	6 or 7 out of every 10 women who would have gotten pregnant will not become pregnant after taking this EC.	Swallow the pills within 5 days after having unprotected sex.	Nausea Vomiting Tiredness Headache Abdominal pain Tiredness	

*For more information on the chance of getting pregnant while using a method or on the risks of a specific product, please check the product label or Trussell, J. (2011). "Contraceptive failure in the United States." Contraception 83(5):397-404.