

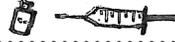
# BIRTH CONTROL OPTIONS

Birth control is all about options; there are plenty of good ones out there. The thing is, no single type of birth control is right for everyone. That's why it's important to find something that works for your body and for your life. Thinking of starting? Try one method for a few months and see what you think. If it's not for you, try another.

## Here are some important questions to ask yourself while weighing your options:

- Do I also need to prevent HIV and Sexually Transmitted Infections?
- Can I remember to use my birth control method when I need it?
- Do I plan to have children in the future? If so, when?
- Do I need to keep my birth control method private from anyone?
- Will my partner cooperate with me in using birth control?
- Am I able to stop right before sex to use my birth control method?
- Do I understand how my birth control works and what side effects I may experience?
- How much will my birth control cost me and are there any ways to get lower-cost birth control? (Birth control can be free or low-cost!)

**HORMONAL METHODS:** These methods work by delivering hormones (progestin and/or estrogen) to a woman's body to stop her ovaries from releasing eggs, or to prevent sperm from traveling to fertilize the egg. They must be prescribed by a health care provider and are usually used all of the time, not just around the time of sex. When you begin using hormonal birth control, it is important to use a back up method, such as a condom, for the first 30 days to prevent pregnancy.

NAME	DESCRIPTION	EFFECTIVENESS AT PREVENTING PREGNANCY	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
<b>BIRTH CONTROL PILLS</b> 	Small pills containing hormones (progestin and/or estrogen) swallowed at the same time every day.	99% when used perfectly 91% with typical use	May make periods more regular or lighter. May clear up acne. Does not interrupt sex. Does not require partner cooperation.	*None of these methods protect against HIV or STIs  Common side effects may include mood swings, spotting or nausea (they usually go away after 1-3 months) or a change in sex drive. Must be remembered at the same time each day.
<b>DEPO PROVERA (BIRTH CONTROL SHOT)</b> 	Injection of hormones given every 3 months by your healthcare provider.	99% when used perfectly 94% with typical use	Only needs to be remembered every 3 months. Does not interrupt sex. Does not require partner cooperation.	Side effects may include mood swings, spotting, lighter or heavier periods, hair loss, change in appetite or sex drive, weight gain. Once shot is given, it cannot be discontinued or removed.
<b>BIRTH CONTROL PATCH (ORTHO EVRA)</b> 	Small, hormone-containing patch which is worn on the skin and replaced once a week.	99% when used perfectly 91% with typical use	Only needs to be remembered once a week. Does not interrupt sex. Can be worn in different places on the body.	Side effects are similar to those of BC pills. May cause skin irritation around patch. Weight restrictions may apply. Only one shade available; does not match all skin tones.
<b>EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION PILLS AKA 'ECP' OR 'THE MORNING-AFTER PILL'</b> 	Pills containing hormones. Swallowed within 5 days after having unprotected sex. Best when taken as soon as possible after unprotected sex.	89% when taken within 3 days; become less effective as time passes	No long term side effects. Prevents pregnancy <i>after</i> sex; a back-up option. Does not require partner cooperation.	Side effects may include nausea, vomiting, breast tenderness, or headache. May cause your period to come early or late. Less effective than birth control methods that can be used ahead of time.
<b>NUVARING</b> 	Thin, flexible ring containing hormones which is inserted into the vagina and left in for 3 weeks.	99% when used perfectly 91% with typical use	May clear up acne or make periods lighter or more regular. Does not interrupt sex or require partner cooperation. Inserted 1x/month.	Side effects are similar to those of BC pills. May increase vaginal infection, irritation or discharge. Occasionally the ring can slip out (easily reinserted.)
<b>IMPLANON / NEXPLANON</b> 	A flexible, matchstick-sized rod inserted under the skin of the underside of your upper arm by a health care provider.	99%	Up to 3 years of pregnancy prevention. Effective within 24 hours after insertion. Does not interrupt sex.	Side effects are similar to those of BC pills. Might also include irregular or lighter bleeding, headaches, pain at the insertion site, weight gain, breast soreness, acne. Implant might be slightly visible under the skin.
<b>MIRENA (HORMONAL IUD)</b> 	Small, plastic, T-shaped device inserted into your uterus by a medical professional. Releases hormones.	99%	Lasts up to 5 years (can be removed earlier.) No partner involvement required; doesn't interrupt sex.	Mild pain/cramping at time of insertion. Irregular periods in the first 3-6 mos. Other side effects similar to those of BC pills.

**CHOICE**

www.choice-phila.org

**NEED HELP FIGURING OUT BIRTH CONTROL OPTIONS?  
HAVE OTHER SEXUAL HEALTH QUESTIONS? CALL CHOICE.**  
(It's free and anonymous.) 215-985-3300 or 1-800-84-TEENS

**BARRIER METHODS:** These methods are used at the time that you're having sex. They work by creating a barrier between sperm and egg. They have **few side effects** and some of them are available at the pharmacy, no prescription needed.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>EFFECTIVENESS</u> <u>AT PREVENTING</u> <u>PREGNANCY</u>	<u>ADVANTAGES</u>	<u>DISADVANTAGES</u>
<b>MALE CONDOM</b> 	Made of latex or polyurethane (plastic). Fits over the erect penis and catches sperm when a man ejaculates.	82-98% depending on how consistently you use them	Very safe to use and easy to buy. <b>Helps protect against HIV and STIs.</b>	Some people are allergic to latex or to the spermicides in some condoms. Interrupts sex and must be used EVERY time you have sex. Requires partner's cooperation.
<b>FEMALE CONDOM</b> 	A thin, polyurethane (plastic) lining that fits inside the vagina to catch sperm when a man ejaculates.	79-95% depending on how consistently you use them	<b>Helps protect against HIV and STIs.</b> Covers a larger area of skin than male condoms = better protection from Herpes and HPV. Very safe to use and easy to buy. <b>May help stimulate the clitoris.</b>	Must be comfortable inserting the condom into your vagina. Requires partner cooperation.
<b>SPERMICIDES (FILM, FOAM, SUPPOSITORIES, JELLY, CREAM)</b> 	Product which is inserted into the vagina before sex to kill or disable sperm.	50% when used alone (72-97% when used with a condom)	Easy to buy and low cost. Does not require partner cooperation.	Must be inserted 15-20 minutes before sex. Many people are sensitive to spermicide. <b>Does not protect against HIV/STIs.</b>
<b>DIAPHRAGM</b> 	Reusable, flexible rubber cup filled with spermicide and inserted into the vagina before sex. Covers cervix. Must be fitted by a doctor.	94% when used perfectly 88% with typical use	Does not interrupt sex; can be inserted hours ahead of time. Does not require partner cooperation. Hormone-free.	Must be inserted up to 6 hours before having sex. Must be left in place for at least 6 hours (but no more than 24 hours) after sex. <b>Does not protect against HIV/STIs.</b>
<b>CERVICAL CAP</b> 	Small, reusable silicone cup that fits over the woman's cervix. Must be filled with spermicide and inserted vaginally before sex. Must be fitted by a doctor.	86%-71% with typical use (Less effective for women who have given birth vaginally)	Provides protection for up to 48 hours; can be used for multiple sexual encounters. Does not interrupt sex or require partner cooperation. Hormone-free.	Must be inserted at least 30 minutes before having sex and left in place for 6-8 hours (but no more than 48 hours) after sex. Can cause irritation. <b>Does not protect against HIV/STIs.</b>

**OTHER METHODS:** These assorted methods work in different ways to help prevent pregnancy.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>EFFECTIVENESS</u> <u>AT PREVENTING</u> <u>PREGNANCY</u>	<u>ADVANTAGES</u>	<u>DISADVANTAGES</u>
<b>COPPER IUD (PARAGARD)</b> 	Small plastic T-shaped device wrapped in copper. Inserted into the uterus by a health care provider. Releases no hormones; works by affecting the way sperm move	99%	Effective for up to 12 years (can be removed earlier.) Does not interrupt sex. Does not require partner cooperation. Hormone-free.	*None of these methods protect against HIV or STIs Pain/cramping at time of insertion. Many women have heavier menstrual flow and cramping, esp. in the first 3-6 months.
<b>NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING/FERTILNESS</b> 	A woman learns which days during her cycle she's fertile and either uses a barrier method (like a condom) or does not have sex during these times.	95%-99% when used perfectly 76%-88% with typical use	Low or no cost. No side effects. Increases woman's knowledge of her menstrual cycle.	Requires close attention to woman's menstrual cycle at all times. Requires partner cooperation. Only works reliably for women who have predictable menstrual cycles.
<b>STERILIZATION "POSTPARTUM/LAPAROSCOPIC TUBAL LIGATION" OR "ESSURE" "VASECTOMY" FOR MEN</b>	Surgery performed to block the fallopian tubes (women) or vas deferens (men) so that her eggs or his sperm are cut off from fertilization.	more than 99%	Does not interrupt sex. Hormone-free. Once completed, you never have to remember birth control again.	Requires an operation. Can be expensive up-front. Tubal ligation and vasectomy are considered to be PERMANENT. Some people regret their decision later.
<b>WITHDRAWAL (PULLING OUT)</b> 	Penis is removed or "pulled out" of the vagina before the man ejaculates, or "comes." Ejaculation occurs outside and away from the vagina.	~75% when the man doesn't ALWAYS pull out on time ~96% when the man pulls out EVERY single time	No cost. Hormone-free.	High failure rates; unpredictable. Requires partner cooperation and trust. Pre-cum may contain sperm.