

For Teens: Birth Control Options



If you have sex, you can get pregnant. Birth control helps lessen the chance that you'll get pregnant during sex. Having sex is a serious decision that you should think about carefully. If you decide to have sex, your healthcare provider can help you decide which type of birth control is best for you. Some of the most common types are described below. No matter which type you choose, remember to use it every time.

Condoms

There are two types of condoms: the female condom and the male condom. The male condom is a thin covering that fits over the penis. They both catch sperm that comes out of the penis during sex. A condom also helps prevent the spread of certain sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Spermicide

Spermicide is a gel, foam, cream, or tablet that you put into your vagina. These kill sperm that touch them. They work best when used with a condom, diaphragm, or cervical cap.

The pill

The birth control pill is taken daily to stop your body from releasing an egg each month. It has to be taken at the same time each day.

Time-release hormones

Hormones like the ones used in birth control pills can be given in other ways. These include a skin patch, a ring inserted in your vagina, injections given in your arm or buttock every 3 months, or an implant placed in your arm that will remain for up to 3 years. You may find one of these methods easier to stick to than pills.

Diaphragm or cervical cap

Diaphragms and cervical caps are round rubber cups that keep sperm out of the uterus and hold spermicide in place. You put them into your vagina before you have sex.

IUD (intrauterine device)

This is a device your healthcare provider will insert into the uterus. It can be left in place for 3, 5, or 10 years depending on the type you choose. This is only a good choice for those who are in stable monogamous relationships where both partners don't have STIs. This is because certain STIs can cause a more serious infection with an IUD in place.

Remember

Here are important things to think about:

- Except for condoms, birth control methods don't protect you from STIs. And condoms don't give you 100% protection.
- There is also something called emergency contraception that comes in the form of a pill or pills. It is best used as soon as possible after sex. But it may be somewhat effective if used within 5 days of sex. This method is one of the least effective forms of contraception and should not be relied on routinely.

- You can decide not to have sex. This is called abstinence. Abstinence is the only way to be completely sure you won't get pregnant.
- Be sure you are ready before you make the decision to have sex. Don't have sex because you think everyone else is doing it.
- Whatever birth control you use, learn how to use it the correct way.

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