

Birth Control: Time-Release Hormones



Certain hormones can help prevent pregnancy. Hormones like those used in birth control pills can be taken in other forms. These must be prescribed by your healthcare provider. These other methods don't require you to do very much. So you may find one of them easier to stick to than pills. Side effects will vary depending on the type of time-release hormone you use. Talk to your provider for more information.



Pregnancy rates

Talk to your healthcare provider about the effectiveness of this birth control method.

Using time-release hormones

Methods to deliver hormones include:

- **A skin patch.** This is placed on your stomach, buttocks, arm, or shoulder. You replace the patch weekly.
- **A ring that you insert in your vagina.** You leave it in for 3 weeks and remove it for 1 week.
- **Shots (injections).** These are given in your arm or buttocks once every 3 months by your healthcare provider.
- **An implant.** This is placed under the skin in the upper arm by your provider. It can be left in place for up to 3 years.
- **Progestin IUD.** This is inserted by your provider. It can be left in place for 3 to 8 years depending on which one is chosen.

Pros

- Lowest pregnancy rate of the birth control methods that can be reversed
- No interruption to sex
- Easy to use
- Don't need to take a pill each day
- May decrease menstrual cramps, menstrual flow, and acne

Cons

- Don't protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- May cause irregular periods
- May cause side effects, such as nausea, weight gain, headaches, breast soreness, severe tiredness (fatigue), or mood changes (these often go away within 3 months)
- May take up to a year for you to become fertile (able to get pregnant) after stopping injections
- May increase the risk of blood clots, heart attack, and stroke

Time-release hormones may not be for you

Time-release hormones may not be for you if:

- You are a smoker and over age 35
- You have high blood pressure, gallbladder disease, liver disease, certain lipid disorders, cerebrovascular disease (stroke), or heart disease
- You have diabetes, migraines, clot in a vein or artery (thromboembolic disorder), lupus, or take medicines that may interfere with the hormones

In these cases, talk about the risks with your healthcare provider.

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