

Birth Control Choices



We understand gender is a spectrum. We may use gendered terms to talk about anatomy and health risk. Please use this information in a way that works best for you and your provider as you talk about your care.

Birth control keeps you from getting pregnant from sex. There are many types of birth control. Some work better than others. New types are tested all the time. Your healthcare provider can help you decide which type is best for you. But no matter which type you choose, you and your partner must use it the right way each time you have sex. Some of the most common types are below.

Condom

A male condom is a thin covering that fits over the penis. A female condom fits inside the vagina. A condom catches sperm that come out of the penis during sex.

Spermicide

Spermicide is a gel, foam, cream, tablet, or sponge. The sponge also works as a barrier with spermicide. It is put in the vagina before sex to kill sperm.

Diaphragm and cervical cap

A diaphragm is a round rubber cup that keeps sperm out of the uterus. A cervical cap is like it, but smaller. They also hold spermicide in place.

Intrauterine device (IUD)

An IUD is a small device put in the uterus by a healthcare provider. It stays in place for months or years as needed.

The pill

The birth control pill is taken daily. It has hormones that stop ovaries from releasing an egg each month.

Other hormones

Hormones that stop an egg from being released each month from an ovary can be given in other ways. These include injection, implant, patch, or vaginal ring.

Other choices

Other birth control methods include:

- **Male sterilization (vasectomy).** This surgery ties off or cuts the tubes (vas deferens) in the testes. It's done so sperm doesn't come out in the semen released from the penis.
- **Female sterilization.** This surgery blocks or cuts the fallopian tubes. It can be done through the belly (laparoscopy) to block the tubes or to remove part or all of them. It can also be done during a C-section.
- **Withdrawal method.** This is when the penis is pulled out of the vagina before ejaculation. The failure rate for this method is high. It ranges from 22% to 28%.

- **Fertility awareness method.** This is when a person with ovaries and a uterus keeps track of their fertile days. They only have sex at times when they are not likely to get pregnant. This method is hard for people who have irregular periods.

Emergency contraception (EC)

Emergency contraception can help prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex. Hormone pills are available over the counter to anyone. They are also known as morning after pills. A second type of EC is a copper IUD. This needs to be inserted by a trained healthcare provider. Either type of EC can be used up to 5 days after sex. But it should be used as soon as possible. The sooner it's used after unprotected sex, the more likely it is to work. EC will not work if you're already pregnant.

Things to consider

Think about the below:

- Choose a type of birth control that is easy for you to use.
- Learn how to use your birth control the right way. Read the package. Follow your healthcare provider's instructions.
- Keep in mind that most types of birth control don't protect you from sexually transmitted infections (STIs). To protect against STIs, always use a latex condom. If you are allergic to latex, a non-latex condom may give you some protection.

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