

Types of Birth Control

Contraception is a term used to prevent pregnancy. There are different types of them around. Some are used by men while others are for women.

There are two major methods of birth control namely barrier or hormonal. Aside from that, the other types include sterilization otherwise known as surgery, withdrawal, natural family planning and the simplest which is abstinence.

Let's talk about each of them.

- The first is the barrier method wherein the male or the female uses a condom to prevent the sperm from ever entering the female's uterus. The male condom comes in many brands, color and flavors and is usually made of latex rubber. This is placed over the penis when it is erect prior to intercourse.

The female condom on the other hand is made of polyurethane and is seven inches long. This allows it to protect the cervix, vaginal canal and the immediate areas surrounding the vagina. It is inserted into the woman's vagina also prior to intercourse.

- Another barrier is known as spermicides. It is a chemical designed to kill sperm and this is available as foam, jelly, foaming tablet and as a vaginal suppository.

- You also have the diaphragm that is a soft rubber dome which stretches over a flexible ring that contains spermicides in the form of cream or jelly.

This is placed inside the woman's vagina and placed over the cervix. Women should take note that this should not stay inside for more than 3 hours prior to intercourse.

- The cervical cap is a small cup made of the same material as a condom. It is also filled with spermicidal cream and inserted into the girl's vagina and placed over the cervix.

- The last is the contraceptive sponge which is a soft saucer shaped device made from the same material as the female condom.

Now that we have discussed the different barriers, it is time to discuss about hormonal birth control methods.

Hormonal devices appear in the form of an implant, patch, pill or shot. They are

designed to prevent the woman's ovaries from releasing an egg monthly, cause the cervical mucus to thicken so the sperm will have a difficult time penetrating the egg or thin the lining of the uterus which reduces the chances of a fertilized egg from ever implanting on the uterus wall.

Some experts believe that they are very effective but they cannot protect you from sexually transmitted diseases or STD's.

- Birth control pills can be acquired from your health provider. Depo-Provera is an injection that costs a little bit more than the pill and can prevent pregnancy for 3 months. Something similar to Depo-Provera is lunelle but this can only prevent pregnancy for up to one month.
- The Nuva Ring or vaginal ring is a flexible ring that is inserted into the vagina for three weeks before this is removed and replaced with a new one. The ring contains chemicals such as estrogen and progesterone that releases this into the body.
- The birth control patch works like the ring as it releases hormones into the body while the IUD is a small plastic device that contains hormones and copper and changes the cervical mucus to decrease the chances of an egg from fertilizing.
- Withdrawal is simply removing your penis out of the girl's vagina before ejaculation. Sterilization closes the fallopian tubes permanently and this is better known as tubal ligation. Men can have the same thing and this is called a vasectomy.
- Natural family planning is simply controlling the number of kids that you want to have.
- Abstinence is not engaging in sexual intercourse at all that is perhaps the most effective type of birth control.