

## Birth Control and Side Effects

There are different types of birth control pills around. Before you start using any, you should consider the side effects.

Studies have shown that there are only two methods that do not have side effects. First is abstaining however, it may be hard sometimes to control the urge if both of you feel like doing it. The best thing to do then is outercourse or masturbation so the sperm will never come into contact with the egg.

The second is with the use of condoms because it does not release any hormones into the body and it is simply used as a barrier that is disposed off after intercourse.

Spermicides come in different forms. There are creams, film, gel, suppositories and tablets. The side effects of using them include the risk of TSS and one of you will experience a burning or itching sensation. It rarely causes a skin rash but when it happens, this will only go away after some time.

Those who choose to use the diaphragm are at risk of bladder and urinary tract infections. If you have had this in the past, you are strongly discouraged to stop using it. There have also been cases of toxic shock syndrome or TSS but is also quite rare. This should not be left in the vagina for more than 24 hours because there will soon be a smelly vaginal discharge, an inflammation or an infection could occur.

Birth control pills have a lot of side effects. These include breast tenderness, headaches, mood changes, nausea, spotting and weight gain. It may also contribute to blood clots, cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, breast and liver cancer.

Apart from conventional birth control pills, there is a new one called Seasonale. Since it has been around for only 5 years, there have only been a few reported cases of blood clots in the legs or lungs, stoppage or rupture of a blood vessel in the heart and other organs, liver tumors and high blood pressure. However, those who have been taking it regularly complain of breast tenderness, weight gain, vomiting and difficulty wearing contact lenses.

The morning after pill is better known as an emergency contraceptive pill or ECP. This must be taken 120 hours after unprotected vaginal intercourse. Its side effects are similar to that of conventional pills but if you happen to vomit within an hour of ingesting the pill, it is advised that you call a doctor. Another thing to keep in mind is that this should not be used as a

regular birth control pill.

The patch is another and this is applied to the skin. One patch is good for a week and this has to be placed for three consecutive weeks and can be placed anywhere in the body. On the fourth week, the female doesn't have to stick anything so she can normally go through her monthly menstrual cycle. Side effects include application site reaction, breast symptoms, headaches, mood swings and vomiting.

Injectables are injected into the body every three months. The sides effects include irregular periods, weight gain and vomiting. Something similar to that are implants and those who use it may experience irregular bleeding, headaches, nausea, depression, dizziness, nervousness, weight gain or loss and hair loss.

Majority of the birth control methods around have side effects. If you don't want to experience any, perhaps not having sex at all is the answer to your problems.