



## How can pregnancy be prevented?

If one is or has decided to become sexually active, it is important that she/he become educated about the different methods of contraception that are available. Although there is no perfect birth control method, choosing a method that best fits one's beliefs, behavior, and medical history is important. The best method will be the one that both sexual partners are comfortable with and will be committed to use consistently and correctly during every sexual encounter.

Type	How it works	Effectiveness	Advantage	Disadvantage	Hormone	Prescription or Doctors Visit Required
<b>Abstinence</b>	No sexual intercourse.	100%	No exposure to STDs; no hormonal or medical side effects; makes someone express their feelings	Decision to remain abstinent may be difficult.	No	No
<b>Sterilization</b>	Males - vasectomy; sperm tubes are cut and blocked. Females - 1. tubal ligation; fallopian tubes are closed. 2. Essure procedure; fallopian tubes are blocked.	>99%	No known long-term health problems; outpatient procedure for vasectomy and Essure; considered permanent	No STD protection; can have surgical complications; may not be reversible	No	Yes; surgery required
<b>Hormonal IUD (Mirena, Skyla, Liletta, and Kyleena)</b>	Small device inserted into the uterus by medical practitioner; prevents fertilized eggs from attaching to the uterus lining. Hormonal: releases progestin; thickens mucus of cervix Copper: works as spermicide	>99%	Always in place; no planning or daily attention; no user error	No STD protection; discomfort during insertion; can become dislodged in rare cases; in copper IUD, possibility of heavier periods	Yes	Yes
<b>Copper IUD (Paragard)</b>		>99%			No	Yes
<b>Nexplanon Implant</b>	Steady, low dose of hormone in the bloodstream; stops release of egg from ovary; thickens cervical mucus	>99%	Provides long term protection (3 years); may be used while breastfeeding; rapid return of fertility	No STD protection; may cause irregular bleeding; possibility of no menstrual period; insertion may be uncomfortable	Yes	Yes
<b>Birth Control Pill</b>	Egg production in the ovary is blocked by a series of pills that regulate the menstrual cycle	91-99.9%	Easy to use; no sex interruption; may lower chances of ovarian cysts and cancer; regulates periods; less menstrual cramping and blood loss	No STD protection; must be taken on a regular schedule	Yes	Yes
<b>Shot (Depo-Provera)</b>	Injectable chemical similar to progesterone; prevents egg from ripening; lasts 3 months	94-99.7%	Does not contain estrogen; long lasting; no daily pill; convenient and private	No STD protection; can decrease mineral stones in bones; may increase appetite	Yes	Yes
<b>Patch</b>	Egg production in ovary is blocked by the patch applied to the skin once a week for 3 weeks; no patch is worn during week 4	91-99%	No sexual interruptions; easy to use	No STD protection; a few people may develop a skin irritation	Yes	Yes
<b>Vaginal Ring</b>	Vaginal ring is inserted in the vagina and left in place for 3 weeks; no ring worn during week 4	91-99%	No sexual interruptions; less estrogen than pill or patch; few serious side effects	No STD protection; must learn how to insert and remove the ring	Yes	Yes

# Types of Contraception

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How do the different types of contraception work?

What is the expected level of effectiveness?

Type	How it works	Effectiveness	Advantage	Disadvantage	Hormone	Prescription or Doctor Visit Required
<b>Male Condom</b>	Thin sheath (usually latex) covering penis to prevent sperm from entering vagina	82-98%	Easily obtained; relatively inexpensive; easy to use; easy to carry; latex helps protect from STDs	Possible allergy to latex or spermicide; must be put on before intercourse; can break or tear if not used correctly	No	No
<b>Female Condom</b>	Thin sheath, made of polyurethane, with ring at each end; put into vagina before sex; prevents sperm from entering the vagina	79-95%	Helps protect from STDs; can be inserted up to 8 hours before intercourse	May be difficult to use and obtain; female condoms are about three times as expensive as male condoms	No	Yes
<b>Emergency Contraception (Ella, Plan B, Copper IUD)</b>	Plan B, Ella, Copper IUDs or other emergency contraceptive methods prevent either the release of an egg, the fertilization of an egg, or the implantation of an egg in the uterus	85-90%	Offers a way to reduce unintended pregnancy after rape, unprotected sex, or method failure	No STD protection; not recommended for routine method of birth control; may cause dizziness, headache, or abdominal pain; possible changes in menstrual flow	Sometimes	Sometimes
<b>Diaphragm or Cervical Cap</b>	Flexible rubber barrier used with spermicidal cream to block and kill sperm moving towards uterus; inserted before intercourse	Typical 88%	Usually no serious side effects; can last several years	No STD protection; requires practice for proper insertion; may be tricky or messy to insert	No	Yes
<b>Rhythm/ Withdrawal or Natural Family Planning (NFP)</b>	Rhythm/ Withdrawal: Remove penis from vagina before ejaculation; Natural Family Planning: Abstain from unprotected sex on days a woman is most likely to get pregnant	Typical 76%	Accepted by most religions; no contraceptive cost; there are lots of apps, websites, and journals that can help with NFP	No STD protection; natural family planning requires record keeping and time of ovulation may be unpredictable; withdrawal is difficult to perform because it requires extreme body awareness and the ability to predict ejaculation	No	No
<b>Spermicide</b>	Destroys sperm; forms a barrier	Typical 71%	Provides lubrication; helps decrease condom breakage; few side effects	No STD protection; requires planning and correct usage according to manufacturer's instructions; can cause some allergic reactions	No	No

**Answer these questions to learn how comfortable you are regarding your method of choice.**

1. Have you ever used it before? If yes, how long did you use it and did you experience any problems with this method (e.g., sickness, pregnancy, etc.)?
2. Are you afraid of using this method?
3. Do you have unanswered questions about this method?
4. Does this method make menstrual periods longer and more painful?
5. Does this method ever cause serious health problems?
6. Do you object to this method because of religious beliefs?
7. Is your partner opposed to this method?
8. Will using this method embarrass you and/or your partner?
9. Will lovemaking be interrupted or be less enjoyable with the use of this method? Does this bother you and/or your partner?
10. Has a nurse or health care provider ever told you not to use this method?

**References**

Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Inc.  
[www.plannedparenthood.org](http://www.plannedparenthood.org)  
 Managing Contraception  
[www.managingcontraception.com](http://www.managingcontraception.com)  
 United States Food and Drug Administration  
[www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov)  
 Bedsider  
[www.bedsider.org](http://www.bedsider.org)

Schedule an appointment with a health care provider to become familiar with the latest advances in contraception. To schedule an appointment with OU Health Services Women's Center call (405) 325-8149.