

A GUIDE TO BIRTH CONTROL

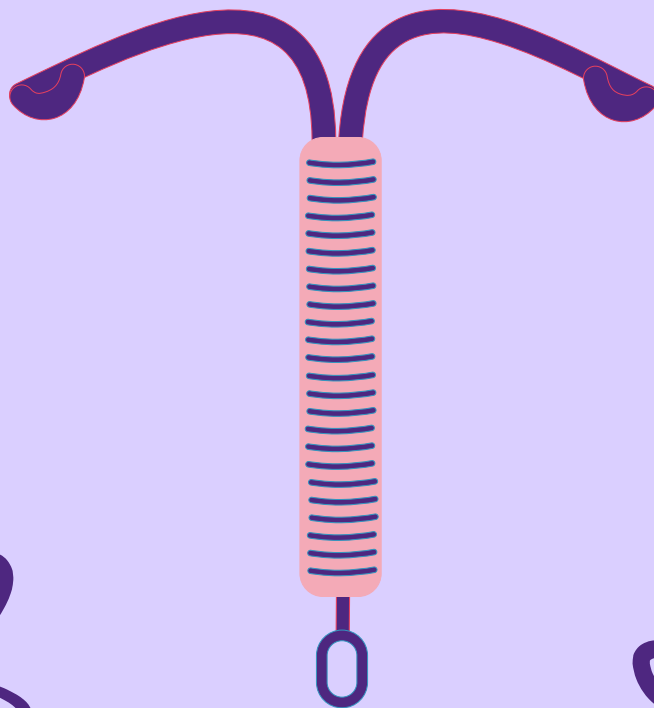


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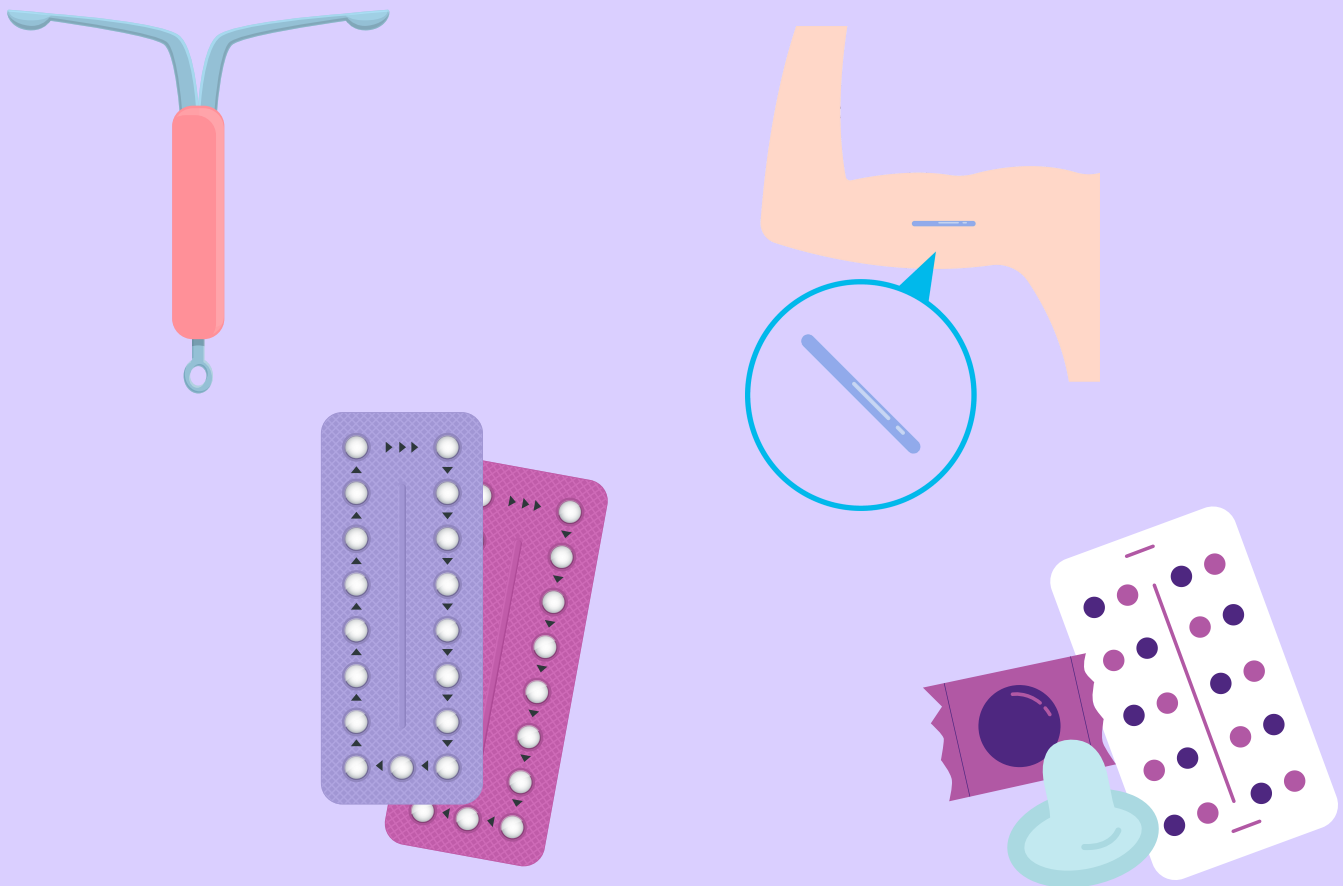
Conclusion

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION TO BIRTH CONTROL



What is Birth Control?

Birth control consists of any sort of method, device, or medication that prevents pregnancy. There are many different kinds of birth control, each with their own pros and cons. The kind of birth control you use depends on your health, desire to have children, and desire to prevent STI's.¹



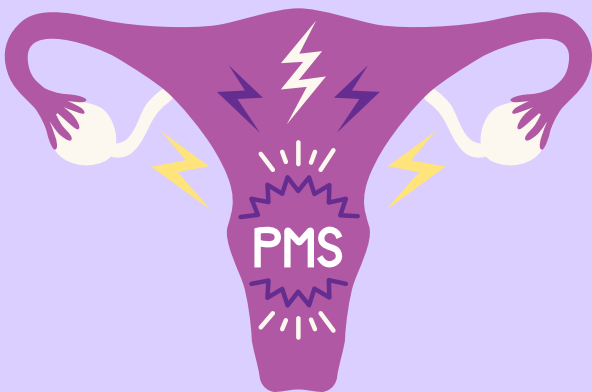
Why do people use birth control?

There are many reasons a person may use birth control other than just preventing pregnancy. Hormonal contraception can help manage symptoms of certain medical conditions, as well as offer other benefits.²



PMS

Nearly **75%** of U.S. women suffer from PMS, a condition in which they become irritable and angry around their periods. Another **8%** suffer from a more extreme version, PMDD. Birth control, specifically oral contraceptives can alleviate this issue.²



Why do people use birth control?

Dysmenorrhea (painful periods)

When the uterus contracts, it can sometimes be painful due to the production of prostaglandin (pain-causing chemical), and birth control, specifically hormonal birth control, causes less of of this chemical to be made. ²



Period Problems

Many women also experience heavy and/ or irregular periods due to medical conditions such as hormonal imbalance or fibroids. In this case they can opt to take progestin-only birth control that helps to regulate and lessen their flow. ²

Why do people use birth control?

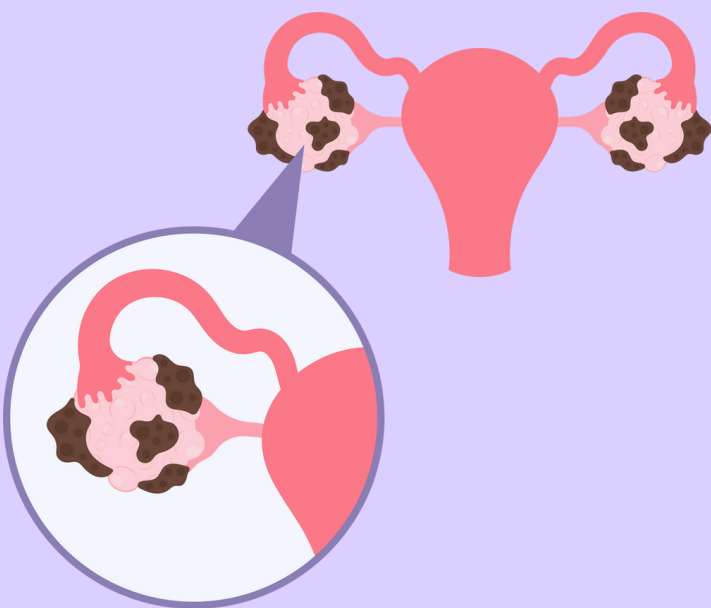
Acne

Many women, especially in their teenage years, suffer from hormonal acne. Because many birth control options are hormonal, they can often be effective in lowering levels of “male” hormones in your body that lead to acne. ²



PCOS/ Endometriosis

For women who experience disorders such as polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) or endometriosis, birth control can often be a very important part of treatment, as it can help to regulate hormones (PCOS) as well as uterine tissue growth (endometriosis). ²



How does birth control work?

How your birth control works depends on the type of birth control you use. Different kinds of birth control work in different ways. Generally, it works by using hormones or other means to:

- prevent a sperm from reaching the egg
- prevent your ovaries from releasing an egg
- damage sperm so they cannot reach the egg
- changing the thickness of cervical mucus or the uterine lining so that fertilization cannot occur ³



What are some common concerns?



Access to Free/ Low Cost Birth control⁴

You can see your options for low cost/free birth control options by making an appointment with the Department of Public Health linked below.

<https://northcentralhealthdistrict.org/birth-control/>

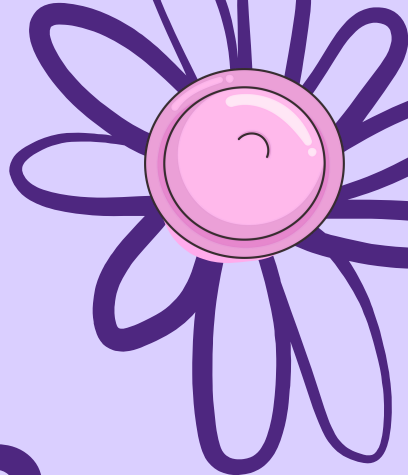
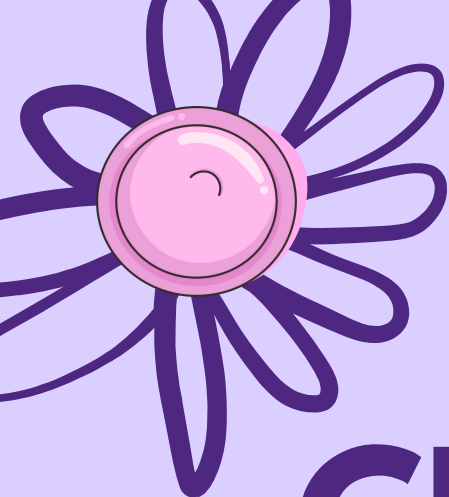
When to see a doctor⁵

If you are experiencing any negative side effects that bother you for longer than 3 months go to your physician to try another type of birth control.

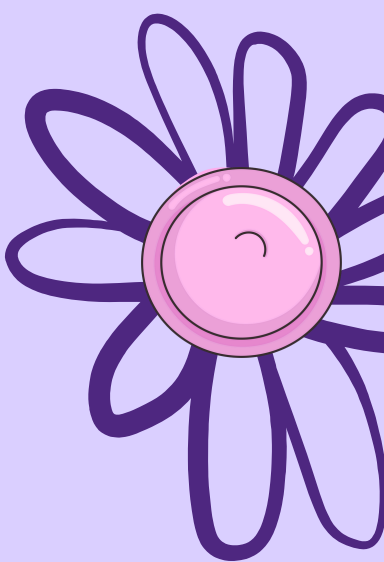
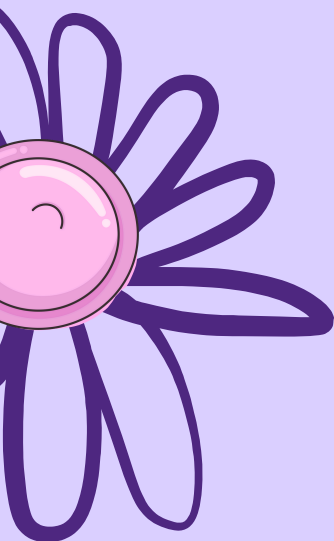


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CHAPTER 3: TYPES OF BIRTH CONTROL



Oral Contraceptives¹

Oral contraceptives, also known as the pill, are a hormonal form of birth control. Birth control pills are taken daily at the same time every day. Oral contraceptives release hormones such as progestin to prevent ovaries from releasing an egg. Oral contraceptives also make it difficult for sperm to enter.

93% effective¹



Condoms

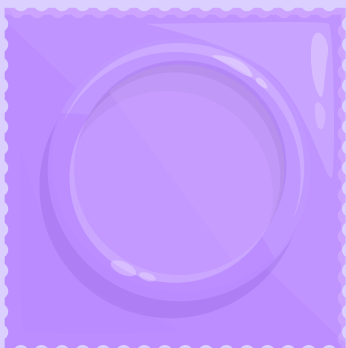
Female 79% effective¹⁰

Female condoms are a non-hormonal form of birth control. They are inserted into the vagina to prevent sperm from entering the uterus. Female condoms also protect against sexually transmitted infections.



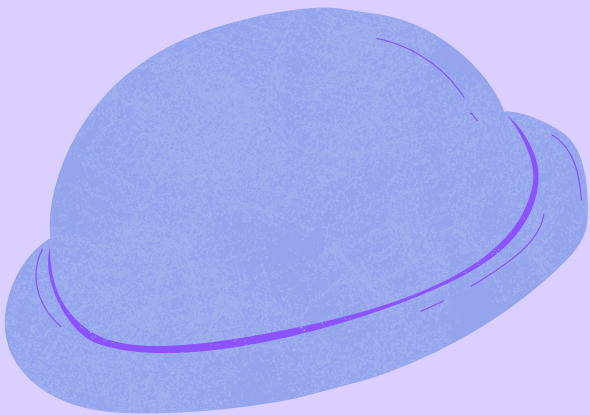
Male 87% effective²

Male condoms are applied over an erect penis and prevent sperm from entering the uterus. They are non-hormonal and often made of latex or polyurethane.



Diaphragm³

Diaphragms are thin flexible discs that can be placed inside a vagina. They are made of silicone and work best if used with a spermicide. Spermicide is a cream or gel that kills sperm. The cup covers the cervix and acts as a barrier to prevent pregnancy.



83% effective

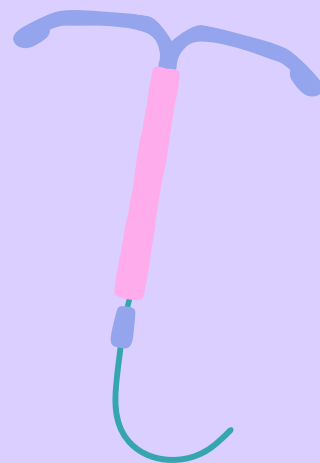
³

Intrauterine device (IUD)⁴

Intrauterine devices (IUDS) are long-term birth control devices that are placed inside the uterus. IUDs are reversible, made of plastic, and shaped like a T. IUDs last 3-12 years and can also be used as emergency contraceptives within 5 days of unprotected sex. There are two types of IUDs: hormonal and copper. Both hormonal and copper change the movement of sperm so that it can not reach an egg. Hormonal IUDs prevent ovulation and thicken mucus to trap sperm. Copper IUDs have a copper wire which sperm does not interact well with.

99% effective

4



Birth Control Patch⁵

Birth control patches are a transdermal form of hormonal birth control. The patch is placed on the body and releases hormones that prevent pregnancy. The hormones prevent fertilization by stopping ovulation. Mucus in the cervix also becomes thicker and more difficult for sperm to swim in.



94% effective

5

Birth Control Ring⁶

The birth control ring is small and flexible and is worn inside the vagina. The ring releases hormones to prevent pregnancy. The two types of ring are NuvaRing and Annovera. The NuvaRing should be replaced about once a month. The Annovera can be worn for up to a year and is worn for 21 days a month and removed for seven days.



93% effective

6

Nexplanon⁷

Nexplanon is a flexible piece of plastic implanted into the upper arm. Once inserted, the implant releases hormones to prevent pregnancy. These hormones thicken cervical mucus to slow sperm movement and stop ovulation. Nexplanon lasts for up to 5 years.



99% effective

⁷

Depo-Provera⁸

Depo-Provera, also known as a birth control shot, is an injection given every three months. Hormones from the shot prevent ovulation and thicken mucus in the cervix to prevent sperm from swimming.



96% effective

⁸

Abstinence⁹

Abstinence is the only 100% effective method of birth control. Abstinence is abstaining from sexual activity but definition varies from person to person. Some people choose to be abstinent from vaginal sex and some people choose to be abstinent from all forms of sexual activity. Fertility awareness is only abstaining from sex on days one is fertile. Anyone can choose to be abstinent at any time, even if they have had sex before.

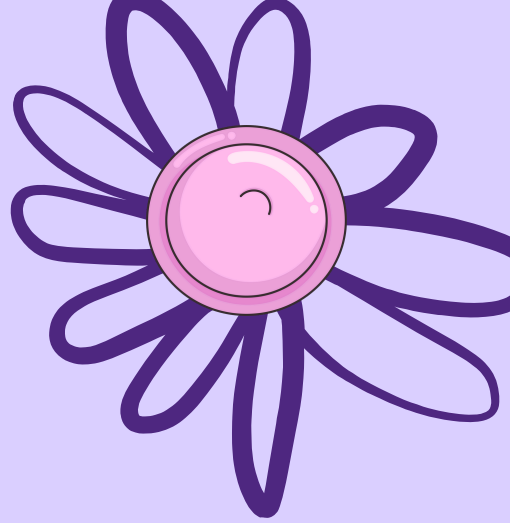
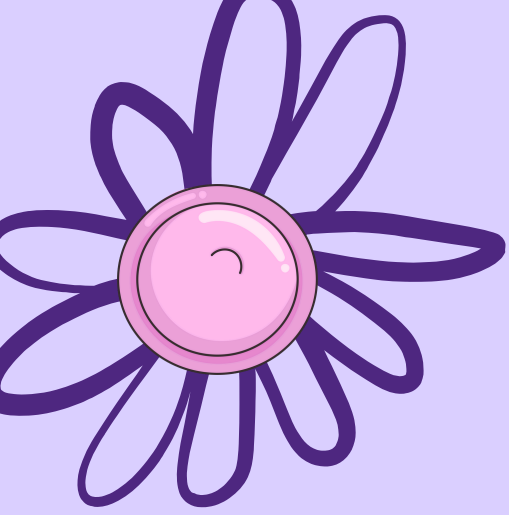


100% effective

⁹

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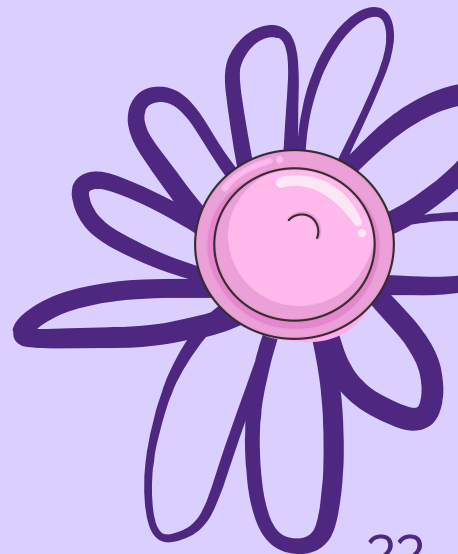
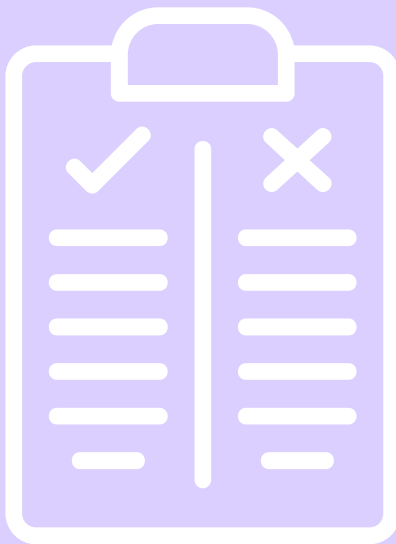
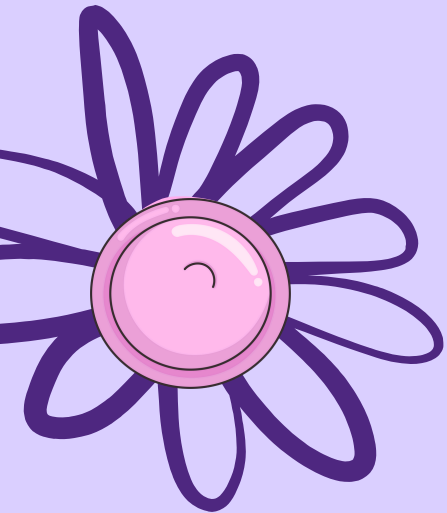
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CHAPTER 3:

BIRTH CONTROL

PROS AND CONS



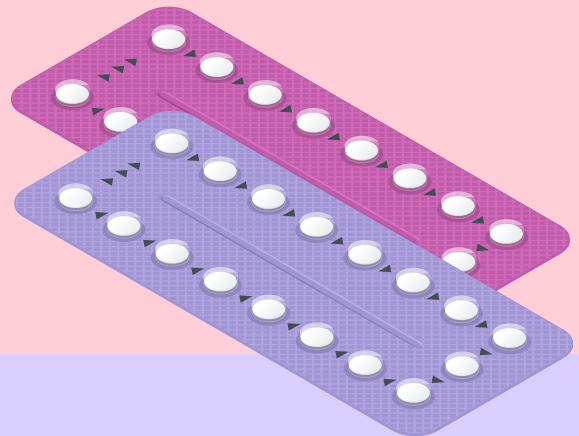
Oral Birth Control

Pros¹

- **93%** Effective
- Reversible
- Convenient
- Can make periods lighter/shorter
- Reduces cramps
- Treats Polycystic Ovary Syndrome
- Lessens symptoms of premenstrual syndrome
- Lowers risk of Ovarian cancer, Uterine Cancer, and Colon cancer

Cons¹

- Must remember to take the pill at the same time everyday
- Unpleasant side effects like nausea and cramping
- Increases risk for deep vein thrombosis, pulmonary embolism, high blood pressure, heart attack, stroke



Condoms

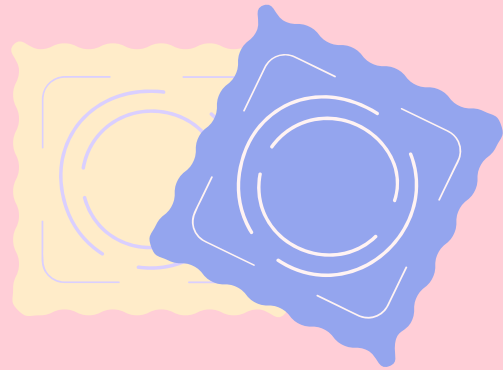
(Male and Female)

Pros²

- **87%** (Male) or **79%** (Female) effective at preventing pregnancy
- Only form of birth control that protects against sexually transmitted infections/diseases (STIs/STDs)
- Accessible (No prescription needed)

Cons²

- Can break or slip off, reducing efficacy
- Vaginal or penile irritation
- Latex allergy



Diaphragm

Pros³

- **83%** effective
- Convenient
- Hormone-free
- Reusable



Cons³

- Difficult to use
- Irritation
- Must use every time

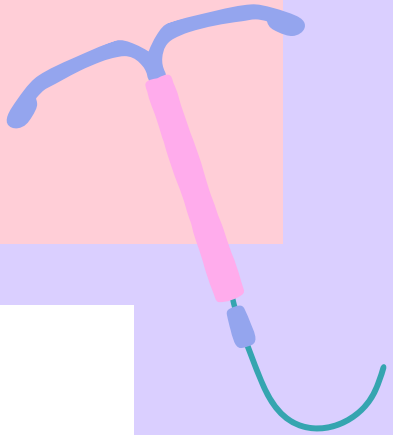


Intrauterine Device (IUD)

Pros⁴

- **More than 99%** effective
- Lasts 3-10 years
- Reversible
- Non-hormonal (Copper IUD)
- Lower risk for cervical cancer
- Regulate period symptoms

Cons⁴

- Needs a provider for insertion
 - Can cause cramps, longer periods, and irregular bleeding
 - Increase risk for ovarian cysts
- 

Patch

Pros⁵

- **94%** effective
- Convenient
- Reversible
- Improve premenstrual syndrome symptoms

Cons⁵


- Skin irritation
- Requires prescription
- Increases risk for blood clots
- Less effective on those with a body mass index (BMI) over 30



Ring



Pros⁶

- **93%** effective
 - Easy to use
 - Don't have to remember daily
 - Reversible
 - Less hormonal side effects than other contraceptives
- 

Cons⁶


- Mild side effects such as headaches or weight gain
- Must remove for vaginal sex
- Increased risk for blood clots, heart attack, stroke, gallbladder disease, hypertension, toxic shock syndrome

Nexplanon

Pros⁷

- **Over 99%** effective
- Lasts 3 years
- Estrogen-free
- Reduces menstrual bleeding
- Reversible

Cons⁷

- Unpleasant side effects
 - Provider must insert in the office
 - Interferes with certain medications
 - Small risk of skin infection
- 

Depo-Provera

Pros⁸

- **96%** effective
- Long term protection (every three months)



Cons⁸

- Irregular menstrual periods
- Unpleasant side effects such as nervousness, acne, hair loss, osteoporosis, or depression
- Takes a few months to reverse effects
- Must regularly visit provider's office for injections

Abstinence

Pros⁹

- **100%** effective
- Allows focus on school and hobbies
- Waiting until ready for a sexual relationship.

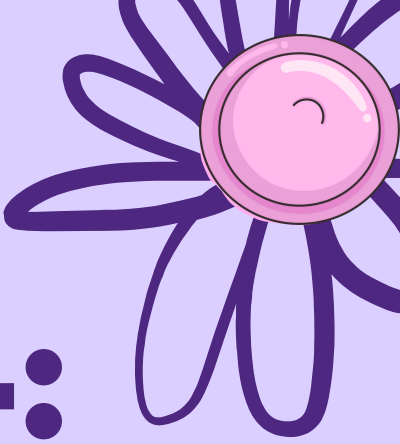
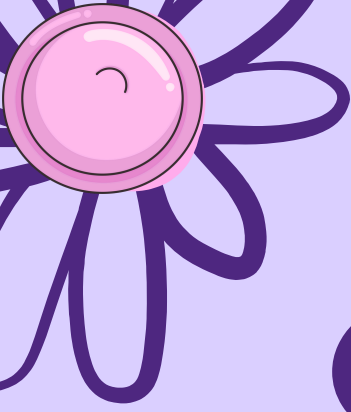
Cons⁹

- Can be difficult to maintain for some people
- Outercourse still has potential for STDs

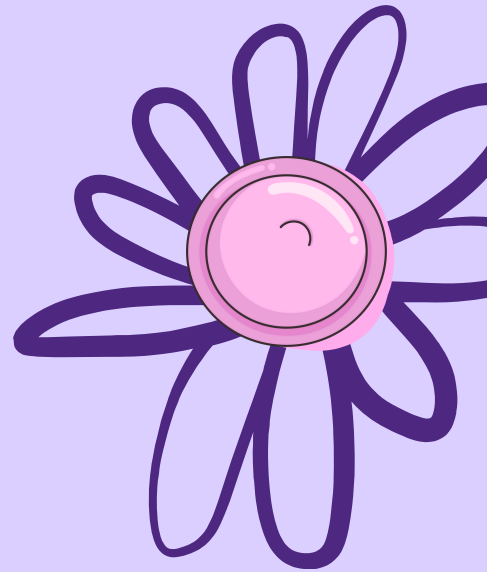
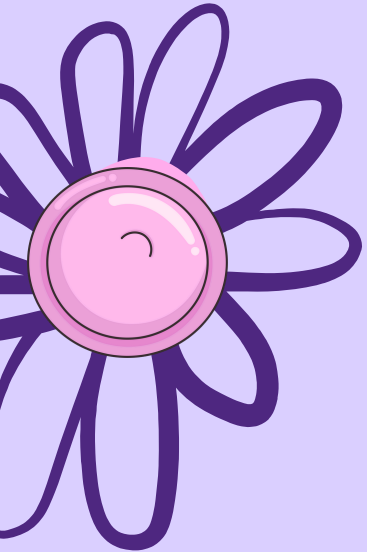


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CHAPTER 4: HOW TO PICK THE BEST BIRTH CONTROL FOR YOU



Factors to consider

Lifestyle:

Consider your the birth control that fits with your current lifestyle and your future plans.



Longevity:

Understand the duration of the birth control and any potential life events that may impact your long-term access to that birth control.



Personal requirements:

Consider the pros and cons of each birth control option, their side effects, and personal needs.



Lifestyle

Questions to consider ³

- Are you planning on having kids in the future? How soon?
- Do you have any health conditions?
- How often do you have sex?
- Do you also need protection from HIV and other STIs?
- What is the effectiveness of the birth control?
- What are the side effects if any?
- Will you be able to use it correctly every time?
- Can you afford the cost of the birth control? Will insurance cover it?
- How often will you have to obtain the birth control?

Lifestyle

Personal experience



Each birth control has different requirements and each person will have a different experience on a different birth control. Reflect on your personal experience and if it is tolerable for you.

Cost

Additionally, you should consider the cost of the birth control and whether an option is accessible to you.



Future plans

Finally, consider your future plans, your experience with the specific type of birth control, and your needs.

Remember, finding the right birth control is a process, do not worry if your first choice does not work for you.

Lifestyle

Commitments:

Like their duration, each birth control also varies between their use requirements. When choosing a type of birth control, consider whether you can use the birth control correctly every time to ensure their effectiveness ³ .

For example, with an IUD or an implant, users simply need to have the birth control placed by a health care professional and eventually replaced to be effective ³ .

Birth control shots on the other hand typically require the users to regularly visit a health center to obtain shot ⁴ .

Finally, birth control pills are fairly strict and require users to take the birth control at approximately the same time every day to ensure effectiveness ³ .

It is important to examine your options, lifestyle, and availability before making a final decision on a birth control.

Lifestyle

Personal Experience:

Like how each person is unique, each person's experience and side effects on a type of birth control are different.

For some people, taking birth control pills at a specific time is not an issue. For others, birth control pills may not be a good option because they are very busy and forgetful. ⁶

Additionally, hormonal birth control like the pill, implant, or IUD can cause some to lose sleep, experience headaches, gain weight, acne, increase stress and mental disorders ¹ .

When picking a birth control option, listen to others' experiences, consider the pros and cons, and experiment for yourself. The best way to find out what is best for you is to see how they work for you.

Lifestyle

Cost:

Each birth control option varies in price. Some options such as the internal and external condom are very affordable.

Meanwhile, other birth control options such as a vasectomy or getting your tubes tied are pricey procedures ⁴.

Reflect on your financial situation, insurance coverage, and the availability of different birth control options in your area ³. Ensure that you are able to afford a specific birth control for the duration you want to use it.

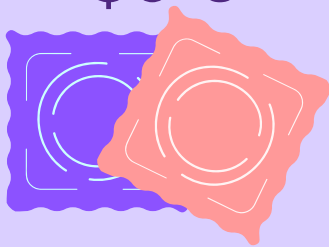
Refer to the table on the next page to compare affordability of different birth control options.

Lifestyle

Cost: ⁴

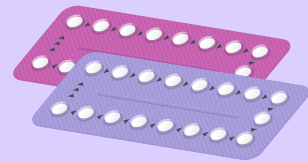
Condoms

\$0-3



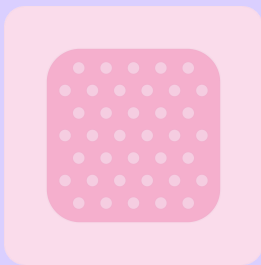
Birth control pill

\$0-50



Birth control patch

\$0-150



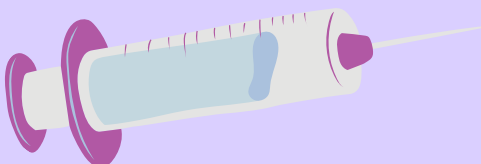
Birth control ring

\$0-200



Birth control shot

\$0-150



IUD and Implant

\$0-1300



Lifestyle

Future plans:

Each birth control has their own lengths of efficacy while in use. Make sure to consider the duration of the birth control and what your future may look like in the near and far future. For example, if you know you are going to be busy or traveling a lot, perhaps consider an IUD or an implant as your birth control of choice.

Additionally, if you are planning on having kids in the future, remember to consider the permanency of the birth control. Birth controls like an IUD or an implant may not be the best option as they require removal before being able to get pregnant³. However, reversible birth controls like condoms or pills are a more convenient option if would like to have kids.



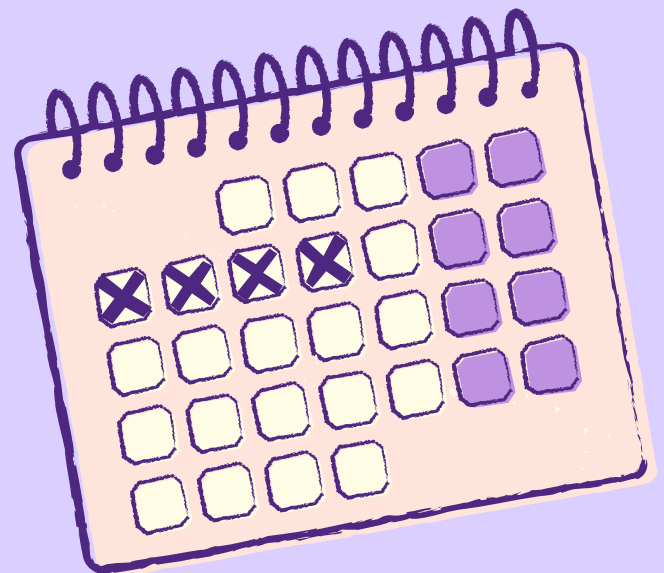
Longevity

Finally, consider the type of birth control and the length of its effectiveness.

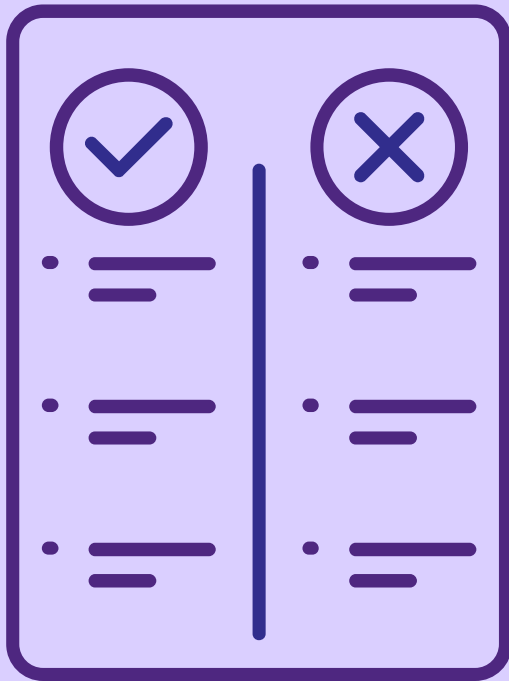
If you are looking for a birth control that provides pregnancy protection all the time for a long period of time or to treat long-term issues, consider getting an implant, IUD, or using birth control pills ³.

If you are simply looking for protection every once in a while or solely for intercourse, consider using condoms with your partner ³.

If you know you are quite busy throughout the day, perhaps avoid opting for birth control shots. Birth control shots require visiting a medical facility at regular intervals which could be difficult if you are busy ³.



Personal requirements



Pro and Cons

Refer to the pros and cons provided in this manual. Reflect on which type of birth control has the best benefits and least downsides for yourself.

Personal needs

Consider your personal reasons for wanting to obtain birth control. Some types of birth control may not be effective at fulfilling your needs ³



Side effects

It is also important to consider the side effects of the birth control and how they make you feel while taking it.

While the benefits of birth control are important, you should also make sure that you still feel like yourself.

Remember, picking a birth control is a process. Reflect on the side effects before choosing a birth control and their effects on you once starting it. It is perfectly normal and reasonable to stop using one type of birth control because their side effects were unbearable for you.

It is also reasonable to mix and match birth controls based on your needs ³ .



Personal Needs

When making the final decision of on a birth control, also make sure to consider your personal requirements for a birth control.

Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Protection

For example, while an IUD is very effective at preventing pregnancy, an IUD does not protect yourself or your partner from an STI. If you are seeking STI protection, consider using condoms or practicing abstinence ³.

Regulating periods

If you are looking to minimize your periods, halt them, or manage period cramps, consider using hormonal birth control options. Hormonal options include the hormonal IUD, vaginal ring, injections, or the patch ¹.

Pregnancy Prevention

Some birth control types such as the birth control pill or condoms are only effective when used correctly. This could leave you at risk for getting pregnant. If you are using birth control to prevent pregnancy, consider using the low maintenance birth control like an IUD or implant ⁵.

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6. Staff H. Personal Stories About Choosing Birth Control Methods. <https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Health/pages/conditions.aspx?hwid=tw9526>

Conclusion

Choosing a birth control method is a personal decision and should be based on what works best for your body, lifestyle, and personal needs. Trustworthy resources can help guide you in your decision and provide further information.

For more information, scan the QR codes below!



Birth Control
Methods from
Planned
parenthood



Find affordable
birth control
options in your
area



Find a Planned
Parenthood
center near you