

Contraception

Birth control is designed to prevent pregnancy, not protect against sexually transmitted infections. Discuss with your provider which of the methods below is best for you.

- **The implant (Nexplanon):** The implant is placed under the skin in your upper arm by a health-care provider and also must be removed by a health care provider. It is over 99% effective for up to 3 years. Your menses may be unpredictable with more irregular, heavier or lighter bleeding and cramping.
- **Progestin IUDs (Mirena, Kyleena, Skyla, Liletta):** The intrauterine device (IUD) is over 99% effective in preventing pregnancy. It must be placed in the uterus by a health-care provider. Depending on which IUD is chosen, it lasts up to 3-6 years. Progestin IUDs may improve period cramps and bleeding, but bleeding may be irregular or menses may stop. The IUD can be used while breast-feeding and you can become pregnant right after it is removed.
- **Copper IUD (Paragard):** This method is non-hormonal. It is over 99% effective in preventing pregnancy and may be left in place for up to 10 years. It also must be placed by a healthcare provider. Paragard may cause more heavy and crampy periods. It can be used while breastfeeding and fertility returns after removal.
- **The shot (Depo-Provera):** This method is an injection that is given every 3 months. It is 96% effective in preventing pregnancy when receiving it timely every 90 days. This typically will decrease or stop periods, but may cause irregular bleeding initially. This method may cause a short-term delay in getting pregnant after you stop the shots.
- **The pill:** There are two different types of pills: a combined pill including both estrogen and progestin, and progestin only pills. The pill can be over 99% effective in preventing pregnancy if taken correctly. Since people tend to forget and are not perfect with taking it at the same time daily, this makes this method about 91% effective. This method can improve PMS symptoms, acne, make

periods more regular and less painful and prevent cancers of the uterus, ovaries and colon. You can become pregnant right after stopping the pills, but sometimes there may be a short-term delay.

- **The patch:** This method is applied as a patch to your skin, typically in the areas of your abdomen, buttocks, or upper body. If used correctly, the patch is over 99% effective. The patch is applied once per week for three weeks, and during the fourth week you do not wear the patch to have a menstrual period. It works in a similar method to the pill and has similar risks and benefits.
- **The ring:** This method is inserted and removed by the patient themselves. It works in a similar way to both the pill and the patch and has similar risks and benefits. It is 91%-99% effective, meaning if used perfectly it is over 99% effective in preventing pregnancy. The ring will stay in vaginally for 3 weeks, and then removed during the fourth week to have a menstrual period.
- **Barrier Methods:** This includes diaphragms, male and female condoms. These methods must be used each time you have sex to be effective. Condoms are over 98% effective when used appropriately and are recommended to be used in combination with other birth control methods. Latex condoms, the most common type, help prevent pregnancy, and HIV and other STDs, as do the newer synthetic condoms and female condoms.
- **Phexxi:** Phexxi is a new, non-hormonal vaginal gel. It works by maintaining the normal, acidic pH of the vagina, which does not allow sperm to survive. If used with every sex act, up to an hour or immediately prior to sex, it is 93% effective.
- **Emergency contraception (Plan B):** Emergency contraception is not meant to be used as a regular method of birth control. It can be used after no birth control was used during sex, or if the birth control method failed, such as a condom breaking. You may take Plan B up to 5 days after unprotected sex, but the sooner it is taken the better it will work. It reduces your risk of pregnancy by 95% if taken in the first 24 hours and 87% within the first 72 hours.
- **Permanent contraception:** There are two methods of permanent contraception, vasectomy for men and tubal ligation or removal for women. Both are surgical options, which are more than 99% effective and permanent, not reversible. These options should be discussed with your doctor when you are certain you do not want any further pregnancies