

# BIRTH CONTROL METHOD COMPARISON CHART

METHOD	EFFECTIVENESS AT PREVENTING PREGNANCY	PROTECTS AGAINST STIS?	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	OTC OR PRESCRIPTION
Abstinence	100%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly effective</li> <li>No side effects, as with other methods</li> <li>No cost</li> <li>Can increase intimacy between partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May be difficult to abstain from all sexual activity for extended periods of time</li> </ul>	
Implant	99.9%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not have to take every day</li> <li>Progestin only-no estrogen related side-effects</li> <li>Lasts up to 3 years</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Insertion may be uncomfortable (The implant is a small flexible rod that is inserted right under the skin of the inner arm.)</li> <li>Progestin-related side effects</li> <li>Large initial cost</li> </ul>	Prescription
IUD	Hormonal: 99.9% Nonhormonal: 99.2%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nothing to put in place before intercourse</li> <li>Some do not change hormone levels</li> <li>Some may reduce period cramps and make your period lighter. For some women, periods stop entirely</li> <li>Can be used while breastfeeding</li> <li>Can be used for an extended period of time (5 years and up)</li> <li>The ability to become pregnant returns quickly once IUD is removed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Large initial cost</li> <li>Some IUDs can cause hormonal side effects similar to those caused by oral contraceptives, such as breast tenderness, mood swings, and headaches</li> </ul>	Prescription (Must be inserted and removed by a clinician)
Depo-Provera*	99.7%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Convenient. One injection prevents pregnancy for 11 - 13 weeks</li> <li>Birth control effects begin as soon as first injection</li> <li>Reversible. Most women can get pregnant within 12-18 months of last injection.</li> <li>Can be used while breastfeeding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May cause adverse effects, including: irregular bleeding; amenorrhea; weight gain; headache; nervousness; stomach pain; dizziness; weakness; depression; decreased libido. Many women who experience side effects during the first few months of use report that these decrease over time</li> <li>Ovulation may not recur for a year after injection</li> <li>May cause significant bone mineral density loss</li> </ul>	Prescription

\*Depo-Provera can be used in patients with sickle cell disease.

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METHOD	EFFECTIVENESS AT PREVENTING PREGNANCY	PROTECTS AGAINST STIS?	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	OTC OR PRESCRIPTION
Sterilization <sup>▲</sup>	99.5%	<b>X</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highly effective</li> <li>Long lasting contraceptive solution</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Usually permanent</li> <li>Reversal procedures are expensive and complicated</li> </ul>	Surgical procedure
Oral contraceptives <sup>●</sup> ("The Pill")	92-97%	<b>X</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Very effective against pregnancy if used correctly</li> <li>Makes menstrual periods more regular and lighter</li> <li>Decreases menstrual cramps and acne</li> <li>Does not interfere with spontaneity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must be taken every day at the same time</li> <li>Can't be used by women with certain medical problems or with certain medications</li> <li>Can occasionally cause side effects such as nausea, increased appetite, headaches, and, very rarely, blood clots</li> </ul>	Prescription
Contraceptive patch	92%	<b>X</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easy to use</li> <li>Small</li> <li>Stays on well (but must be replaced weekly)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Possible skin reactions</li> </ul>	Prescription
Vaginal ring	92%	<b>X</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easy to use</li> <li>Can be worn for three weeks (Must be taken out and replaced monthly)</li> <li>Effects fertility one month at a time</li> <li>Does not interfere with spontaneity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased risk of heart attack and stroke</li> <li>Possibility of expulsion from the body</li> </ul>	Prescription
Emergency contraception <sup>✦</sup> ("Morning after pill" or Plan B)	89%	<b>X</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduces the risk of pregnancy by 89 percent when started within 72 hours after unprotected intercourse</li> <li>Available over the counter to women 15 and older</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must be taken as soon as possible after unprotected intercourse</li> <li>Possible side effects, including nausea, vomiting, and irregular bleeding</li> </ul>	Over the counter

<sup>▲</sup> Female sterilization involves tying off or removing portion or all of the passageway for the eggs. Male sterilization tying off or removing portion of the passageway for the sperm (vasectomy).

<sup>●</sup> While birth control works after 7-10 days with the pill, it may take the body up to 3 months to get used to the pill and for side effects to subside.

<sup>✦</sup> Plan B should be taken within 120 hours (5 days) of unprotected sex, but the sooner it is taken the more effective it is. It should not be used as a primary method of birth control.

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METHOD	EFFECTIVENESS AT PREVENTING PREGNANCY	PROTECTS AGAINST STIS?	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	OTC OR PRESCRIPTION
Diaphragm with spermicide	88%	<b>X</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can be carried in pocket or purse</li> <li>• Can be used while breastfeeding</li> <li>• Can't be felt by you or your partner</li> <li>• Has no effect on natural hormones</li> <li>• Immediately effective</li> <li>• Can be inserted hours ahead of time (Should be left in place at least 8 hrs after intercourse to allow spermicide to work fully)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires fitting and periodic refitting</li> <li>• Requires insertion of additional spermicide before each sex act or after 2 hours have passed</li> </ul>	Prescription
Male condom <sup>•</sup>	84%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Widely available over the counter</li> <li>• Easy to carry</li> <li>• Actively involves the male partner in contraception</li> <li>• Helps prevent STIs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decreases spontaneity</li> <li>• May break during use, especially if it is used improperly</li> </ul>	Over the counter
Cervical cap with spermicide	60-80%	<b>X</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smaller version of the diaphragm</li> <li>• Can be placed up to 6 hrs before sex</li> <li>• Few side effects</li> <li>• Reusable and relatively inexpensive</li> <li>• Requires less spermicide than a diaphragm</li> <li>• Rarely hinders the sexual experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Requires consistent use</li> <li>• May need to be resized</li> <li>• While it should be left in place at least 8 hrs after intercourse, may cause toxic shock syndrome if left in for more than 24 hrs</li> <li>• May be difficult to insert or remove</li> <li>• May produce an allergic reaction</li> </ul>	Prescription
Sponge	60-80%	<b>X</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Immediate and continuous protection for 24 hours</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May be difficult for some women to insert or remove</li> <li>• May cause vaginal irritation.</li> <li>• May make sex too messy or too dry (water-based lubricants can help with dryness)</li> </ul>	Over the counter

<sup>•</sup> Male condoms are available in latex, polyurethane, polyisoprene, and lamb skin. Lamb skin condoms do not protect against STIs. If using latex condoms, use only water-based lubricants, not oil-based ones.

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Female condom <sup>▲</sup>	79%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Female-controlled</li> <li>More comfortable to men, less decrease in sensation than with the male condom</li> <li>Offers protection against STIs (covers both internal and external genitalia)</li> <li>Can be inserted before sex</li> <li>Stronger than latex</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not aesthetically pleasing</li> <li>Can slip into the vagina or anus during sex</li> <li>Difficulties in insertion/removal</li> <li>Not easy to find in drugstores or other common sources of condoms</li> <li>Higher cost than male condoms</li> </ul>	Over the counter, where available (available online)
Withdrawal ("Pulling Out")	78%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free</li> <li>Can be used in combination with other birth control method</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>May not withdraw in time</li> <li>Pre-ejaculate can still contain viable sperm</li> <li>Very ineffective in pregnancy prevention</li> </ul>	
Fertility Awareness <sup>●</sup> <i>Rhythm (Calendar) Method, Basal Body Temperature (BBT), Cervical Mucus (Ovulation) Method</i>	76%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires no drugs or devices, but does require abstaining from sex during the entire first cycle to chart mucus characteristics</li> <li>Inexpensive</li> <li>May be acceptable to members of religious groups</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Calendar: Requires good record keeping before and during use of method</li> <li>Mucus: Restricts sexual spontaneity during fertile period</li> <li>Requires extended periods of abstinence</li> <li>Unpredictability of cycle</li> </ul>	
Vaginal Spermicide* (used alone)	74%		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Easy to insert (foam, cream, suppository, or jelly)</li> <li>Enhances vaginal lubrication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must be inserted before each act of intercourse</li> <li>May leak from vagina</li> </ul>	Over the counter

<sup>▲</sup> Do not use the female condom together with a male condom.

<sup>●</sup> Calendar method: Determine high-risk days or ovulation through keeping a calendar. Mucus method: Must keep daily chart of color and consistency of vaginal secretions. BBT: Body temp in the morning tends to drop slightly immediately before ovulation.

\* Follow package instructions for insertion time, which may vary.

**NOTE: Percentages of effectiveness are based on the typical use of each method rather than perfect use.**