

What's your plan?

A guide to choosing the right birth control for you.



There are many easy, safe and effective birth control options available. Waiting until your youngest child turns two before having another baby is healthier for mom, baby and the whole family. Get the facts and make a plan. Talk to a health care professional to find the best method for you. Remember, even when you use birth control, you should also always use condoms to protect against sexually transmitted infections (STI) and HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Low maintenance methods

Methods like the implant and IUDs do not require you to remember to do anything to use them correctly. Yet they are safe, work well to prevent pregnancy, last years at a time and are completely reversible once removed.

99%

Implant

The implant is a small, flexible plastic rod, about the size of a matchstick. It is inserted under the skin of your upper arm by a health care professional. The implant can last up to three years, but you can have it removed sooner. The effects are completely reversible once it has been removed. Periods are often lighter and less painful. Implants are more than 99% effective.

99%

Hormonal IUD

The hormonal IUD is a small, T-shaped plastic device that is inserted into your uterus by a health care professional. There are hormonal IUDs that can last up to three years and one that can last up to five years. You can have it removed sooner and the effects are completely reversible once it has been removed. Periods are often lighter and less painful. The hormonal IUD is more than 99% effective.

99%

Non-hormonal IUD

The non-hormonal IUD is a small, T-shaped plastic device inserted into the uterus by a health care professional. It can last up to 10 years. You can have it removed sooner and the effects are completely reversible once it's removed. The non-hormonal IUD is more than 99% effective.



Trust your memory methods

These methods work well when you remember to use them correctly all the time, or you may become pregnant.

94%

Birth control shot

The shot is given in your upper arm by a health care professional and can last for three months. You must return to get another shot every 12 weeks. Periods are often lighter and less painful. The shot is more than 94% effective.

91%

Birth control pills

Birth control pills are taken orally every day. You must take the pills at about the same time each day for them to work best. Birth control pills are available with a prescription from a health care professional. Periods are often lighter and less painful. Birth control pills are 91% effective.

91%

Patch

The patch is a thin, bendable piece of plastic that looks like a square bandage and is available with a prescription from a health care professional. One patch lasts for one week. After one week you take off the old one and put on a new patch. You do this one time each week for three weeks. On the fourth week you do not use a patch and you get your period. Periods are often lighter and less painful. The patch is more than 91% effective.

91%

Vaginal ring

The vaginal ring is a small, flexible ring you insert into your vagina. The ring is available with a prescription from a health care professional. You put the ring into your vagina. You leave the ring in place for three weeks and take it out on the fourth week to get your period. After a week with no ring, you insert a new ring to start the cycle again. Periods are often lighter and less painful. The vaginal ring is more than 91% effective.

82%

Condoms

There are male and female condoms available at most drug stores and online. Condoms alone are 82% effective in preventing pregnancy. Using a condom along with another birth control method is the best way to prevent pregnancies and STIs. Condoms should be worn during each oral, anal and vaginal sexual encounter. Even if you use birth control, you should always use condoms. Condoms are the only method that protect against STIs and HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

Emergency birth control

If you forget to use birth control or the condom breaks during sex, you can use emergency birth control, often called the morning after pill. There are different emergency birth control pills. Some are over the counter at some local pharmacies and there is a pill available by prescription from a health care provider. The non-hormonal IUD can also be used as emergency contraception and must be inserted by your health care provider within 5 days of unprotected sex. Emergency birth control does not protect against STIs.

Natural family planning

Natural family planning involves learning and tracking the menstrual cycle to determine what time of the month sexual intercourse is most likely to result in a pregnancy. You should avoid sex when the chance of pregnancy is highest if you do not want to get pregnant.

