



January Memo:

Types of Contraceptives and Misconceptions

WHAT IS BIRTH CONTROL?

Birth control refers to medications, devices, or methods used to prevent pregnancy. Types of birth control include sterilization, hormonal contraceptives, barrier methods, and emergency contraceptives. Some methods are more effective than others, and effectiveness depends on correct and consistent use.

Hormonal Contraceptives

Combined Oral Contraceptive Pill (COCP): a pill containing estrogen and progestin that prevents ovulation, thickens cervical mucus, and thins the uterine lining.

- Frequency: taken daily at the same time
- Effectiveness: ~93% with typical use

Progestin-Only Pill: a pill containing only progestin that thickens cervical mucus and may suppress ovulation.

- Frequency: taken daily at the same time
- Effectiveness: ~93%

Birth Control Patch: a small adhesive patch worn on the skin that releases estrogen and progestin to prevent ovulation.

- Frequency: changed weekly for 3 weeks, followed by 1 week off
- Effectiveness: ~93%

Vaginal Ring: a flexible ring placed in the vagina that releases estrogen and progestin to prevent ovulation.

- Frequency: inserted for 3 weeks, removed for 1 week
- Effectiveness: ~93%

Injection (Depo-Provera): an injection of progestin that suppresses ovulation and thickens cervical mucus.

- Frequency: every 3 months
- Effectiveness: ~96%

Subdermal Implant: a small rod placed under the skin of the upper arm that releases progestin to prevent ovulation.

- Frequency: effective for up to 3 years
- Effectiveness: >99%

LAYERED PROTECTION

Using more than one form of birth control can increase overall protection. For example, pairing a hormonal method with a barrier method, such as condoms, may further reduce the risk of pregnancy. Barrier methods also help protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), while hormonal contraceptives primarily prevent pregnancy.

Intrauterine Device (IUD): a small T-shaped device placed in the uterus.

- **Copper IUD:** stops sperm from making through the vagina and uterus to reach an egg.
 - Frequency: 10 years
- **Plastic Progestin IUD:** thickens cervical mucus so sperm cannot reach an egg.
 - Frequency: 3-7 years (depending on brand)
- Effectiveness: >99%

MISCONCEPTIONS

1. "I can't get pregnant if I don't orgasm."

- While it is necessary for a man to ejaculate, it is not for a woman. This is because during the fertile window, all a woman needs to do is have an egg released into the fallopian tube. From there, sperm from a man's orgasm fertilizes the egg.

3. "The Pull Out Method."

- This involves removing penetration before ejaculation, and many regard it as a safe birth control method.
- In practice, around 1 in 5 people who use this method will become pregnant. In other terms, it is 80% effective. This might seem like good odds, however it is important to acknowledge that most birth controls are 99% effective, and yet it is still common for pregnancy to occur when using these methods.

5. "Birth control will make me "crazy.""

- Because birth control interacts with hormones, it can have different affects for each person. While it might create mood instability for some, it can make others feel a lot better. It is important to discuss side effects with your doctor to find the correct birth control for you.

2. "I won't get pregnant if I bathe or urinate after sex."

- While this might be depicted in movies, it's important to understand this is not factual information. Once sperm has entered the uterus, water or urine cannot stop it.

4. "Birth Control damages fertility."

- Hormonal and barrier contraceptives are reversible. This means that your fertility will return after you stop using it.

6. "Birth control will prevent STIs"

- For this to be true, it must be a barrier contraceptive (condoms). However, condoms only lower the risk, not eliminate them. It is necessary to discuss health with your partner before having intimate relations.

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Birth control effectiveness

NON-HORMONAL



Natural
Cycles

93%



Copper
IUD

99%



Male
condom

87%

HORMONAL



Hormonal
IUD

99%



Vaginal
ring

93%



The
pill

93%

Percentage of typical users who did not get pregnant with the method over one year of use.
Reference: Contraceptive Technology (Table 26 - 1). 21st Edition, 2018

<https://www.naturalcycles.com/cyclematters/birth-control-effectiveness-explained>

SOURCES

Types of Contraceptives Sources:

[Cleveland Clinic Birth Control Options](#)

[Planned Parenthood Interactive Birth Control Options](#)

[Birth Control & Provider Finder](#)

[Copper vs Plastic IUD](#)

Misconception Sources:

[Birth Control Myths](#)

[10 Myths About Contraception](#)

[Conception: Fertilization, Process & When It Happens](#)

[Pull Out Method \(Withdrawal\): Effectiveness & Risks](#)