
	Emergency Contraception Morning After Pill	Oral Contraceptive The Pill	Contraceptive Patch The Patch	Vaginal Ring The Ring	Depo Provera The Shot	Mirena IUD Intra Uterine Device	Paragard T Intra Uterine Device
*Effectiveness	75 - 89%	92% - 99.7%	92% - 99.7%	92% - 99.7%	97% - 99.7%	99.9%	99.2% - 99.4%
How Often	After Sex	Every Day	Every Week	Monthly	Every 3 Months	5 Years	10+ Years
Hormones	ADDS Hormones	ADDS Hormones	ADDS Hormones	ADDS Hormones	ADDS Hormones	ADDS Hormones	NO Hormones
Access	Prescription and Clinic Visit Required except some states	Prescription and Clinic Visit Required	Prescription and Clinic Visit Required	Prescription and Clinic Visit Required	Prescription and Clinic Visit Required	Prescription and Clinic Visit Required	Prescription and Clinic Visit Required
What is it?	Emergency Contraception Pills prevent pregnancy after sex. Also called Morning After Pill. Brand name is Plan B. Contains high dose of same hormones as birth control pills. Prevents ovulation	Synthetic hormones similar to estrogen and progesterone produced by the body. "Mini" pills contain progestin only.	Looks like a bandaid about 1 inch square. Contains synthetic hormones similar to estrogen and progesterone produced by the body.	A thin, transparent, flexible 2 inch ring worn inside the vagina that slowly releases synthetic hormones similar to estrogen and progesterone.	Injection of progestin, a synthetic version of body's natural progesterone. Lasts 12 weeks (3 months).	Small (1 to 1½ inch) plastic device with a string attached, shaped like a T. Releases synthetic progestin hormone.	Small (1 to 1½ inch) plastic device with a string attached, shaped like a T with a tiny copper wire wrapped around the stem.
How it works or How to use	Swallow pills as soon as possible. May be effective through 5 days after unprotected sex. Some clinics will call in a prescription, others require an office visit.	Swallow one Pill daily, at about the same time each day. Prevents ovulation (ovaries do not release egg), affects the lining of uterus, thickens cervical mucus, stops sperm, prevents fertilization. Variety of doses and options - work with clinic to find best formula for you.	Apply one Patch per week for three weeks. No Patch on the fourth week. Prevents ovulation (ovaries do not release egg), affects the lining of uterus, thickens cervical mucus, stops sperm, prevents fertilization.	Woman Inserts the Ring into her vagina and leaves it for three weeks. She removes it for the fourth week, then inserts a new ring the next week. Prevents ovulation (ovaries do not release egg), affects the lining of uterus, thickens cervical mucus, stops sperm, prevents fertilization.	Each shot elevates progestin to a level that stops production of progesterone and estrogen. As a result, no eggs are released from the ovaries (prevents ovulation). Lining of uterus thins, cervical mucus thickens and stops sperm.	Inserted through the cervix into the uterus by a clinician. Impedes movement of egg and sperm, affects the lining of the uterus, stops fertilization.	Inserted through the cervix into the uterus by a clinician. Impedes movement of egg and sperm, affects the lining of the uterus, stops fertilization.
Advantages	You get a second chance to prevent pregnancy. Safe for women who do not regularly use The Pill due to health risks. Can be used if raped.	Allows spontaneity. Easy to use. Usually decreases size and length of periods, decreases cramps. Decreases chance of ovarian cancer.	Allows spontaneity. Easy to use. Usually decreases size and length of periods, decreases cramps.	Allows spontaneity, only need to change once a month. Usually decreases size and length of periods, decreases cramps.	Private, allows spontaneity. Antibiotics do not weaken effectiveness. May cause lighter or no periods. May decrease risk of cancer of ovary or uterus.	Cost effective, allows spontaneity, may cause light to no periods, lasts 5 years.	Cost effective, allows spontaneity, lasts 10 or more years.
Disadvantages and Health Risks	May cause nausea and vomiting if using regular birth control pills for EC (this side effect is very unlikely with Plan B). Does not protect against HIV/STIs.	Must take every day. May cause nausea, breast tenderness, weight gain or loss, water retention, increased blood pressure, mood changes, headaches. Effectiveness possibly reduced by antibiotics or barbiturates. May increase chance of breast cancer. Does not protect against HIV/STIs.	May cause nausea, breast tenderness, weight gain or loss, water retention, increased blood pressure, mood changes, headaches, skin irritation near Patch. Effectiveness possibly reduced by antibiotics or barbiturates. May irritate contact lenses. May increase chance of breast cancer. Does not protect against HIV/STIs.	May cause vaginal irritation, nausea, breast tenderness, weight gain or loss, water retention, increased blood pressure, mood changes, headaches. Effectiveness possibly reduced by antibiotics or barbiturates. May increase chance of breast cancer. Does not protect against HIV/STIs.	May causes loss of bone density and risk of osteoporosis - not recommended for long term use or for very young women. Frequently causes weight gain. May cause irregular bleeding, loss of sex drive, acne, hair loss, mood swings, depression, nervousness, headaches. May take long time to get pregnant after last shot. May increase chance of breast cancer. Does not protect against HIV/STIs.	May cause irregular bleeding or period may stop. Does not protect against HIV/STIs.	May cause more painful, heavier periods. Should not be used by women who are allergic to copper. Does not protect against HIV/STIs.
Additional Comments	Most effective when used as soon as possible after unprotected intercourse. Not designed to be used frequently or regularly. Does not affect an existing pregnancy.	Not recommended for smokers over 35 or women with past heart attack or stroke, chest pain, blood clots, gallbladder disease, cancer, liver disease, or high blood pressure. Some types can be used as Emergency Contraception.	Not recommended for smokers over 35 or women with past heart attack or stroke, chest pain, blood clots, gallbladder disease, cancer, liver disease, or high blood pressure. Less effective for women over 198 pounds.	Not recommended for smokers over 35 or women with past heart attack or stroke, chest pain, blood clots, gallbladder disease, cancer, liver disease, or high blood pressure. One size fits all. Smaller than rings in female condom.	Nearly every woman experiences menstrual changes. Requires 4 trips to clinic each year. Can usually be used by smokers over age 35 because it contains no estrogen, only progestin.	Mutually monogamous relationship reduces possibility of uterine infection. Check monthly using finger to feel string at cervix to make sure IUD is in place.	Mutually monogamous relationship reduces possibility of uterine infection. Check monthly using finger to feel string at cervix to make sure IUD is in place.

	Cervical Cap	Diaphragm (with jelly or cream)	Spermicidal Foam, Cream, Gel, Suppository, Film	Female Condom	Male Condom	Withdrawal Pulling Out	Abstinence	Fertility Awareness	Sterilization
*Effectiveness	68% - 91%	86% - 94%	71% - 82%	79% - 95%	85% - 98%	73% - 96%	100% ?	80% - 98%	99.9% permanent
How Often	Each Time	Each Time	Each Time	Each Time	Each Time	Each Time	Each Time	Every Day	Once
Hormones	NO Hormones	NO Hormones	Uses Chemicals	NO Hormones	NO Hormones	NO Hormones	NO Hormones	NO Hormones	
Access	Prescription and Clinic Visit Required	Prescription and Clinic Visit Required	In Stores	In Stores	In Stores	Anyone Can Use	Anyone Can Use	Anyone Can Use	Doctor Required
What is it?	2 inch tall rubber cup that a woman inserts into vagina to fit snugly over the cervix. Held in place by suction. Brand names Lea's Shield and FemCap.	Soft flexible rubber dome or cup about 2½ inches across that a woman fills with spermicide and inserts into vagina over the cervix. Held in place by vaginal muscles.	Spermicides are chemicals, usually Nonoxynol-9, that kill sperm. Can be highly effective when used with condom, cervical cap, or diaphragm. Does not add hormones.	A soft, loose polyurethane pouch that fits inside vagina. Flexible rings at each end of pouch hold it in place. Smaller inner ring goes deep inside. Larger ring stays outside over vulva.	A thin latex sheath that fits over the hard penis. Also known as 'rubber' or 'glove.' Variety of styles such as lubricated or non-lubricated, ribbed or non-ribbed, bright colors or clear, various flavors.	The man pulls his penis out of the vagina before climax and ejaculation (before coming). Also called 'coitus interruptus.' Depends on male's self knowledge and self control.	Difficult to define: for some, it means zero sexual contact. For others it is no sexual contact that can cause pregnancy.	Fertility Awareness is learning the changes in a woman's body throughout her menstrual cycle to determine her fertile time (days are most likely to get pregnant).	Female: Out patient procedure to block, close or cut fallopian tubes. Male-Vasectomy: Out patient procedure to cut the vas deferens or tubes inside scrotum.
How it works or How to use	Barrier that blocks sperm from passing through cervix, prevents fertilization. Add a small amount of spermicide inside Cap. Leave in for 8 hours after intercourse. Proper fit and insertion are important.	Creates a physical and chemical barrier. Stops sperm and prevents fertilization. Put 1-2 teaspoons of spermicidal gel or cream into center of Dvciaphragm. Insert over cervix. Leave in place for 6-8 hours after sex. Add more spermicide to vagina for subsequent intercourse.	Follow instructions on container. Insert foam, gel, cream, suppository or vaginal contraceptive film (VCF) into vagina over cervix. Can be inserted up to one hour before intercourse. Repeat for each act of intercourse. Add more if one hour has elapsed before sex.	Creates a natural feeling barrier. Pouch catches semen and sperm, preventing it from entering woman's body. Prelubricated.	Traps sperm inside condom so it cannot enter woman's body. Put on before any genital contact. Place condom on tip of erect penis, unroll to the base leaving an empty space at tip to collect the semen. Hold rim so it does not slip off, especially at withdrawal. Do not reuse.	Male should urinate and wipe the tip of penis before intercourse. Then he must pull completely out before coming. Effectiveness increases when couples work together.	Do not engage in any sexual activity that results in the release of sperm near or in the vagina. For abstinence to be 100% effective, it must be used 100% of the time.	Involves calendar charting plus daily monitoring of cervical fluid, position of the cervix, and basal body temperature to determine beginning and end of fertile time. Requires abstinence or use of a barrier method during fertile time to prevent pregnancy.	Female: Eggs cannot travel through Fallopian Tubes. Prevents sperm from meeting egg. Male: Blocks sperm. The man's body continues to make semen, but it does not contain sperm. Prevents fertilization.
Advantages	Cost effective. Can be put in up to 48 hours before sex, allows spontaneity. Only need to apply spermicide once, even if intercourse is repeated. Small, easy to carry around.	Cost effective. Easy to carry around. Comfortable. Can be put in up to 2 hours before sex. Various styles available, clinic will help find a good fit for you.	Easy to buy at grocery and drug stores. Lubrication may increase pleasure.	Blocks sperm, STIs and HIV. Can be inserted 8 hours before sex. Can be used by people with latex allergy. Can be used with any lubricant.	Latex or polyurethane types block STIs and HIV. Very effective at preventing pregnancy when used with spermicides. Inexpensive.	No cost. No hormones. Can increase communication between partners.	Always available, no cost, no hormones. Promotes communication between partners.	No health risks or side effects. Increased knowledge and awareness of woman's body. Can increase communication between partners.	Permanent. No chemicals or devices to put in or take out before and after intercourse, allows spontaneity. Female: Immediately effective.
Disadvantages and Health Risks	Can interrupt sex play if not already inserted. May be difficult to insert or remove, can be dislodged during intercourse, some women have allergy to spermicide. Needs refitting after giving birth. Less reliable if you previously gave birth.	Can be messy, can interrupt sex play. May increase risk of bladder infections. Some women have allergy to spermicide. Spermicide tastes bad. Ask clinic to refit if lose or gain more than 15 pounds.	Can be messy, may interrupt sex play. Tastes bad. Possible allergic reaction or vaginal irritation. When used frequently, spermicides may irritate the vagina making it easier to catch HIV/STI.	Bulky. Makes noise during movement. May be awkward in beginning but gets easier over time. Needs extra lubricant.	May decrease sensation for male. Interruption may cause loss of erection. Possible allergy to latex. Lambskin or 'natural' membrane condoms do not protect against HIV/STIs.	Even sperm outside the vagina on the vulva can travel inside and cause pregnancy. Especially difficult for teens to use. Drugs, alcohol, young age or lack of sexual experience can reduce effectiveness. Does not protect against HIV/STIs.	May be difficult to abstain for long periods of time, may be difficult to obtain partner's cooperation. Oral sex and use of sex toys do not protect against HIV/STIs unless a barrier is used, such as a condom or dental dam.	Fertility Awareness takes time, effort and dedication. Effectiveness depends on consistent monitoring. Requires daily commitment and self-control. Does not protect against HIV/STIs.	Does not protect against HIV/STIs. Not reversible. Possible regret. Male: Not effective until after about 20 ejaculations after surgery. See doctor for a sperm test before relying on this method
Additional Comments	Less likely to cause bladder infections than Diaphragm. Not recommended if you had toxic shock syndrome. Effectiveness increases with good education and support to position cap over cervix. May offer some protection against HIV and some STIs.	Not recommended if you had toxic shock syndrome. May offer some protection against HIV and some STIs.	Do not douche for at least 8 hours. Avoid not having enough in the container by keeping extra on hand. Irritability varies, foaming types may irritate more than film or cream.	Female controlled protection against HIV. With practice can be very easy to use. Outer ring may cause soreness or pleasure for one or both partners. Males usually report no reduction in sensation as compared to male condom.	Do not use with petroleum (oil) based lubricants, like vaseline, baby oil, or cold cream. To maintain arousal and encourage continued use, be creative and playful.	One of the few options for males. More effective than not using any method of birth control. A man who is willing to use self restraint shows his respect for the woman's desire to not get pregnant.	As a method of birth control, abstinence does not necessarily mean refraining from sexual pleasure. Exploration of sensual and sexual feelings, while avoiding activities that cause pregnancy, could lead to more sexual satisfaction.	Active involvement of male partner increases effectiveness. Cycle Beads can help you track your cycle.	Excellent if you don't want to reproduce. Permanent. Young people with no children may have difficulty finding a doctor to perform sterilization.

Birth Control Comparison Chart

Choosing contraception (birth control) is an important decision. The chart may help answer your questions:

How do I use it?	How does it work?
How effective is it?	Will I use it every time?
How will it affect my partner?	Are there side-effects?
Where do I get it?	What will I do if it doesn't work?
How important is it to me to prevent pregnancy and disease?	

Women use different birth control methods at different stages in their lives. The various methods affect individual women differently. No one method is best for everyone. Use this chart to compare methods and find contraceptive choices to fit your health needs and lifestyle. Ask your health care provider for details about specific brand names or other questions you may have.

Using Birth Control

Correct use of birth control is important to prevent pregnancy. Simultaneous use of two methods reduces risk. For example you can use a male condom and a cervical cap, spermicide and a male condom, or withdrawal and spermicide.

Emergency Contraception = Morning After Pill

It is possible to prevent pregnancy **after sex** by taking the Morning After Pill (Emergency Contraception or EC). Call 1-888-NOT-2-LATE or go to the website: ec.princeton.edu to find a location near you. It's not too late to fix a mistake, then plan your birth control method for next time. In Washington State, you may go directly to a pharmacy without first getting a prescription.

*Effectiveness

Effectiveness is defined as the rate of pregnancy per 1000 women over one year's time. For example, if a method is listed as 99.5% effective then, on average, out of 1000 women 5 will get pregnant in one year. For each birth control method two rates are given. The lower rate is based upon "typical" use. The higher rate is when the method is used correctly and consistently ("perfect" use). The ratings are from a book called *Contraceptive Technology* published in 2004.

Emergency Contraception's effectiveness rating is different than the others because its rating has to do with reducing the risk of pregnancy one time, rather than over the course of a year. Effectiveness of EC goes down the longer you wait between sex and taking the pills.

Preventing HIV/AIDS or Sexually Transmitted Infections

To prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STI) including HIV/AIDS, partners must use a barrier (female or male condom, dental dam or plastic wrap) to prevent blood, semen or vaginal secretions from passing from one partner to another during vaginal, anal or oral sex.

Abortion

If contraception does not work and pregnancy results, you have three options: abortion, parenting, or adoption. Abortion does not affect a woman's ability to get pregnant in the future.

Breast Feeding

When a woman is breast feeding exclusively (no formula or baby food) with feedings no more than 4-6 hours apart AND it has been less than 6 months since she gave birth AND her periods have not returned after giving birth, breast feeding is 98-99% effective for birth control. If a woman is breast feeding, she may want to avoid using hormonal birth control so that hormones are not passed to her baby in breast milk.

Cedar River Clinics

- First and Second Trimester Abortion, Medical Abortion (The Abortion Pill), STI Testing and Treatment, Pregnancy Testing, Birth Control, Well Woman Exam, Pap Smear.
- Located in Tacoma, Renton, and Yakima, WA. For Appointments call 800-572-4223.

Published in 2005 by Feminist Women's Health Center of Washington State with funding from The Lalor Foundation.