



Birth Control Options



Oral Contraceptives (the “pill”)

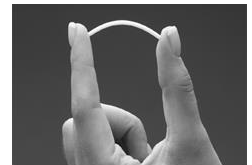
Oral contraceptives (the “pill”) contain hormones that keep a female’s body from releasing eggs. You may like the “pill” because you do not have to “get ready” before having sex.

The “pill” may not be the best choice for women who tend to forget to take medicine or who have certain medical problems. The “pill” must be taken by mouth every day at the same time to be effective.



Birth Control Implant

Implanon™ and Nexplanon™ are birth control implants for women. The implant is a small matchstick-sized rod that is placed just under the skin on the inside of the upper arm. This is done in the clinic by making a small cut in the upper arm. The implant releases a low, steady dose of a hormone called progestin, which causes the cervical mucus to thicken and the lining of the uterus to thin. This prevents sperm from reaching the egg. It also suppresses ovulation. It lasts up to three years, but can be removed before then if needed. It is very important that you return to the clinic once a year for an annual physical and pelvic exam.



The Shot - Depo Provera



The Birth Control Shot

This method is a shot of the hormone progestin that stops the female body from releasing eggs. You need one shot every 12 weeks for this method to be effective. This may be a good choice for you if you have trouble remembering to take the pill daily. Depo-Provera® is the brand name.

Intrauterine Device (IUD)

The intrauterine device (IUD) is a T-shaped device that is put into your uterus by your healthcare provider. It works primarily by preventing the sperm and the egg from uniting. ParaGard® does not contain hormones. The ParaGard® IUD is effective for ten years. The Mirena® IUD does contain hormones and is effective for up to five years. It is important that you get an exam once a year while you have an IUD.



Vaginal Ring



Contraceptive Ring

The ring is a flexible ring about two inches around. You put it in the vagina and it slowly releases hormones that stop the ovaries from releasing eggs. After 21 days, you take out the ring to allow your period to begin. You put a new ring in after seven days to continue your protection from pregnancy. NuvaRing® is the brand name.

The Contraceptive Patch

This is a medicated patch that you apply or “stick” to the body (upper outer arm, buttocks, abdomen or thigh). It uses hormones to stop the ovaries from releasing eggs. You put on a new patch every week for three weeks. The fourth week, you leave the patch off to allow a period to start. After a seven day break, you put a new patch on the skin to continue your protection. Ortho Evra® is the brand name.

Contraceptive Patch



Diaphragm with Spermicide

The diaphragm is a dome-shaped, flexible cup made from latex, rubber, or silicone. You fill the cup with

spermicidal jelly and place it into the vagina. It covers the cervix, blocking sperm from traveling to the egg. You must put the diaphragm in before you have sex, and leave it in for at least eight hours after having sex.

Spermicides (Contraceptive Foam, Creams, Jellies, Vaginal Film)

Spermicides prevent pregnancy by killing sperm on contact. It must be placed into your vagina before sex and must be reapplied before the next sex act. You must avoid douching, swimming or tub baths for at least eight hours after sex, otherwise your birth control protection will be washed away. Using a condom along with spermicide increases effectiveness. Spermicides that are used repeatedly may irritate the vagina, making you more susceptible to contracting HIV.

Foam is easy and quick to use. It comes in a can with a plastic applicator. Before sex, you use the applicator tube to place foam into the vagina. Foam provides protection for 20 to 30 minutes.

Creams and Jellies come in a tube with a plastic applicator. Before having sex, you squeeze the cream or jelly into the applicator and place it in your vagina. Creams and jellies provide protection for 20 to 30 minutes.

Vaginal Film is inserted 15 minutes before having sex. It is a very small, thin square that is folded and placed high in the vagina against the cervix. It dissolves in minutes and provides protection for 45 minutes to an hour.

Condoms are strong, thin rubber coverings. There are condoms that the man rolls onto his penis before sex. There are also female condoms that you can insert before sex. The condom catches the sperm and keeps them from getting into the vagina. A condom works best when it is used with a spermicide. This method also offers some protection against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).



Natural Family Planning

Through careful, daily observation of body signs and symptoms, this method helps you determine when you are most fertile. This information is then used to avoid or achieve pregnancy. You can learn how to use this method by talking to your healthcare provider.

Permanent Methods (Sterilization)

Sometimes men and women decide they have all the children they want. If they are sure of this, they may choose sterilization (permanent birth control). Sterilization is an operation that may be performed on either a man or woman to keep him or her from having more children. These operations do not take away the desire or ability to have sex. For a man, the procedure is called a vasectomy and it blocks the tubes that carry a man's sperm. If you have questions about vasectomy, call our Regional Vasectomy Program at 641-4718. For a woman, the procedure may be a tubal ligation or tubal occlusion. These block the fallopian tubes where the egg and sperm meet. For questions about permanent birth control options for females, call 641-3723.

Emergency Contraception (ECP)

Emergency Contraceptive Pills are also called "morning after pills." They contain hormones like the birth control pills and work similarly to the "pill." They are taken by the female after she has had sex without using birth control or if her usual method has failed. ECP must be taken within 72 hours (three days) of having sex to be effective. Brand names are Plan B One-Step® and Next Choice®. ECP is an emergency method and should not be used as regular birth control.

No method of birth control is 100 percent effective. Abstinence (not having sex at all) is the sure way to not become pregnant.

For more information about birth control methods, contact Guilford County Department of Health and Human Services, Family Planning Clinic at 641-3245.

PEC APP 2/12.rv.1.2016