

Birth Control: What you should know

When it comes to choosing a birth control that is right for you, it is important to be fully informed about all of your options. From long-term methods that can last up to 10 years, to pills that you take on a daily basis, there's a method that fits everyone's unique preferences.

Implanon

Implanon is a thin rod placed in your arm that releases progestin to prevent pregnancy for up to 3 years.

Advantages

- Estrogen free.
- You do not need to take it on a daily basis.
- Lasts up to 3 years but can be removed sooner.

Disadvantages

- Must be implanted and removed by a clinician.
- Does not protect against HIV or other STIs.

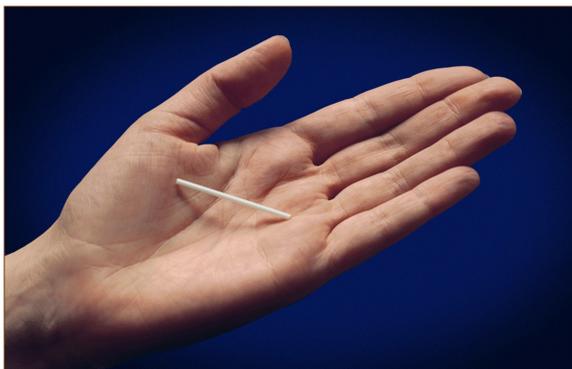
Possible Side Effects

- Change in menstrual period.

Rarely have:

- Mood swings.
- Weight gain.
- Depression.

Implanon is 99% effective.



Implanon

IUD

IUD stands for Intrauterine Device. An IUD is a small T-shaped piece of plastic that is placed into the woman's uterus. There are two different types of IUDs: copper and hormonal.

Advantages

- The copper IUD lasts for 10 years and the hormonal IUD lasts for 5 years.
- You do not need to take it on a daily basis.
- It can be removed at any time.

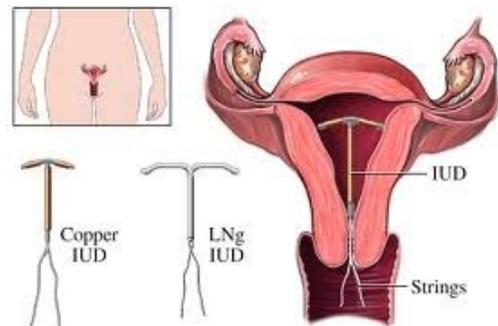
Disadvantages

- Must be inserted and removed by a clinician.
- Does not protect against HIV or other STIs.

Possible Side Effects

- Cramping or bleeding for a short time after the IUD is inserted.
- More cramping and more bleeding during menstruation with the copper IUD than with the Mirena (hormonal).

The IUD is 98-99% effective.



IUD

The Pill

The Pill is a form of birth control that works by releasing hormones through a pill which is taken orally once a day at the same time each day.

Advantages

- Can reduce menstrual cramps and acne.
- Does not interrupt sex.
- May make your periods more regular.

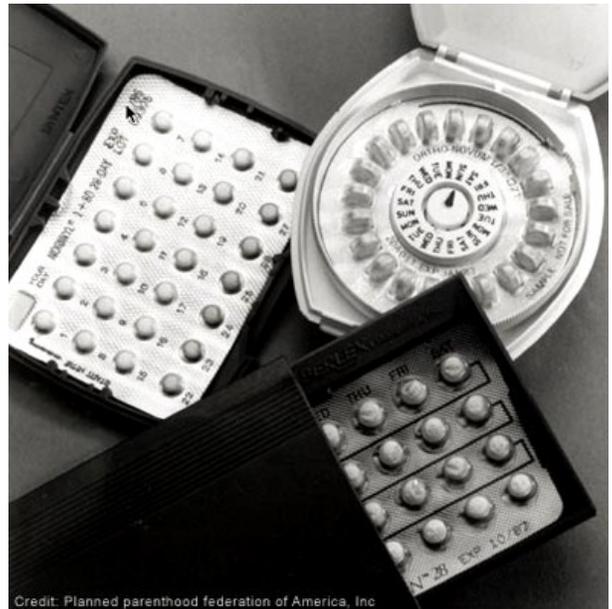
Disadvantages

- You must remember to take the pill on a daily basis at the same time every day.
- Does not protect against HIV or other STIs.

Possible Side Effects

- Nausea.
- Spotting between periods.
- Lighter period.
- Mood changes.

The pill is 99% effective.



Credit: Planned parenthood federation of America, Inc



The Ring

The Ring is a soft rubber device that is placed into your vagina and releases hormones, estrogen and progestin, to prevent pregnancy. The Ring can be removed on the same day each month, and a new ring inserted 5 days later; or it can be inserted for 3 weeks and removed for 1 week.

Advantages

- You do not have to take it on a daily basis.
- You can insert and remove the ring yourself.
- In most cases, the woman and her partner cannot feel the ring once it is inserted in the vagina.

Disadvantages

- Does not protect against HIV or other STIs.

Possible Side Effects

- Increase in vaginal discharge.
- Bleeding between periods.

The Ring is 98-99% effective.

The Patch

The Patch is a small bandage-like adhesive square that is placed on the skin (abdomen, shoulder, buttocks or upper arm) and releases progestin and estrogen. One patch is applied weekly for 3 consecutive weeks, and no patch is applied during the fourth week to allow for menstruation.

Advantages

- You do not have to remember to take it on a daily basis.
- May make periods more regular.
- May reduce cramps.

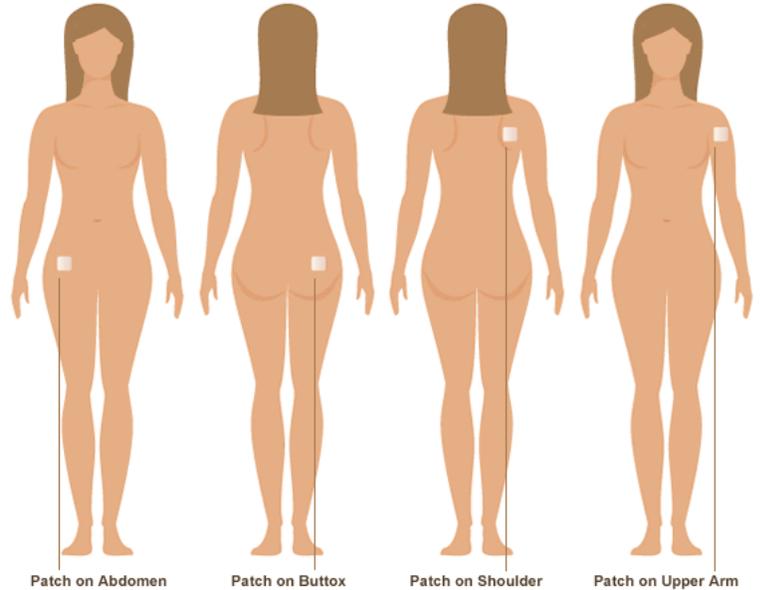
Disadvantages

- May become loose or fall off.
- Does not protect against HIV or other STIs.

Possible Side Effects

- Skin irritation.
- Mood swings/depression.
- Lighter periods.

The Patch is 99% effective.



Patch placement

The Shot

The shot is an injection that is given once every 12 weeks to prevent pregnancy. The shot contains the hormone progestin which helps to prevent pregnancy.

Advantages

- Lasts for 12 weeks.
- No one can tell you are using it.
- You do not have to remember to take it on a daily basis.
- Does not contain estrogen.

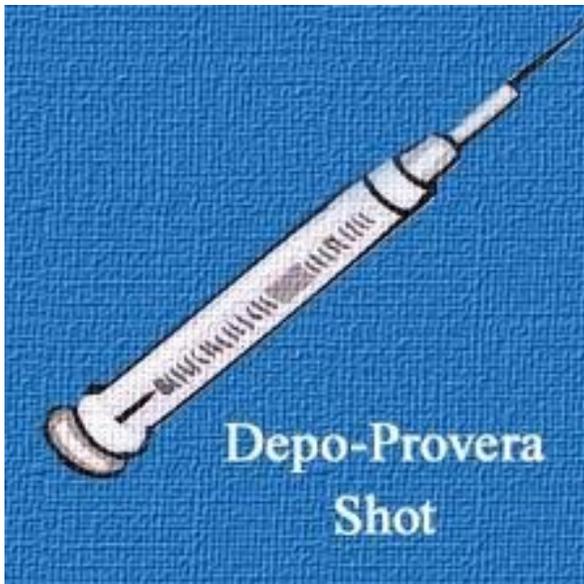
Disadvantages

- You must go to your doctor every 12 weeks to receive a new injection.
- Does not protect against HIV or other STIs.

Possible Side Effects

- Irregular bleeding.
- Depression.
- Nausea.

The shot is 99% effective.



Condoms/Female Condoms

Condoms, whether for a male or female, are very important to wear each time you have sex. They are made from latex, polyurethane or lamb skin and prevent semen from entering the vagina. Condoms are the only form of birth control that protect against HIV and other STIs.

Advantages

- Anyone can purchase them without a prescription.
- Protects against HIV and other STIs.
- Do not affect future fertility.

Disadvantages

- Must use a new one every time you have sex.
- Must stop to put the condom on before any sexual contact.

Condoms are 95-98% effective.

You can get 10 condoms a day at the Student Health Service at no cost just by presenting your student ID. The SHS also offers Family PACT which provides family planning and reproductive health services, including condoms, at no cost to you.



Emergency Contraception

Emergency Contraception (Plan B) is designed to prevent pregnancy after your birth control has failed (ex: condom broke) or unprotected sex. It should not be used as a primary form of birth control. If you are already pregnant, EC will have no effect on a fetus.

Advantages

- Does not require a prescription if you are 17 or older.
- Helps prevent a pregnancy after unprotected sex or contraceptive failure.

Disadvantages

- Requires a prescription if you are under the age of 17.

Possible Side Effects

- Abdominal pain.
- Changes in menstrual bleeding.

Emergency Contraception is up to 90% effective. The sooner you take it after unprotected sex, the more effective it is. The SHS also offers Family PACT which provides family planning and reproductive health services, including Emergency Contraception, at no cost to you.

