

What are my contraceptive options?



The choice

Effectiveness & advantages

Main drawbacks

Short-acting contraception



Combined pills
Tablets contain estrogen and progestogen
(Many types available containing different combinations of estrogen and progestogen in different dosing regimens)

- At least 99% effective when taken correctly
- Works mainly by preventing egg release
- May be useful for young healthy women who can reliably take pills

- Not suitable for women with conditions such as high blood pressure
- Not suitable for women over 35 who smoke
- Effectiveness can be affected by vomiting or diarrhoea



Progestogen-only pills
Tablets contain only progestogen
(Many different types available)

- 99% effective when used correctly
- May be suitable for women who do not want to or cannot take estrogen

- Effectiveness can be affected by vomiting or diarrhoea

2 main ways in which they work, one -

- Works mainly by preventing egg release
- In case of missed pill, can be taken up to 12 hours late

whereas the other -

- Works mainly by preventing sperm entering the womb
- In case of missed pill, must be taken within 3 hours

- May not consistently prevent egg release
- Women may have changes in menstrual pattern



Patch
Patch containing estrogen and progestogen

- At least 99% effective when used correctly
- Applied once a week for 3 weeks each month

- May be seen on the skin
- Not suitable for women with conditions such as high blood pressure
- Not suitable for women over 35 who smoke



Vaginal ring
Flexible ring which is placed inside the vagina
Contains estrogen and progestogen

- At least 99% effective when used correctly
- Only needs to be replaced once a month (one week following removal)
- No need to remember a daily pill

- Need to learn how to insert
- Not suitable for women over 35 who smoke
- Not suitable for women with conditions such as high blood pressure



Condoms (male and female)
Barrier method that the man or woman can use

- When used correctly, around 98% effective for male condoms and 95% for female condoms
- May be useful for those who wish to avoid taking hormones or, as additional protection
- Offers protection against many sexually transmitted infections

- Putting them on can involve interruption of intercourse
- The male condom can split or rupture
- The female condom can be pushed aside



Diaphragms/caps
Barrier methods that you fit inside the vagina to cover the cervix

- Effective in 92–96% of women when used with spermicide and used correctly
- Maybe useful for those who wish to avoid hormones

- Can take time to learn how to use it
- Involves forward planning or interruption of intercourse
- Can be messy as you need to use spermicide as well



Natural methods
Recognising the fertile and infertile times of your cycle to plan when you should avoid intercourse

- May be useful for those who wish to avoid devices or hormones
- Can be used at all stages of reproductive life

- Can take up to 6 months to learn effectively
- Stress or illness can make the method unreliable
- Need to avoid intercourse at certain times of the month and be highly motivated

Long-acting contraception



Implant
Small flexible rod which is placed just under the skin
Contains progestogen

- Over 99% effective
- Lasts for up to 3 years
- Fertility returns to normal as soon as the implant is removed
- No need to remember a daily pill

- Women may have changes in menstrual patterns
- Insertion and removal must be performed by trained healthcare professionals



IUD (the coil)
Intrauterine device that is fitted into the womb

- 98–99% effective
- Women who want longer-term contraception or who do not want to take hormones
- Fertility returns to normal as soon as the device is removed
- No need to remember a daily pill

- Periods may become heavier, longer or more painful
- Insertion and removal must be performed by trained healthcare professionals



IUS
Intrauterine system that is fitted into the womb
Contains progestogen

- Over 99% effective
- Lasts for up to 5 years
- Fertility returns to normal as soon as the system is removed
- No need to remember a daily pill

- Women may have changes in menstrual patterns
- Insertion and removal must be performed by trained healthcare professionals



Progestogen injections
Injection containing progestogen
Injected every 8 or 12 weeks

- Over 99% effective
- No need to remember a daily pill

- Cannot be immediately reversed in event of side effects
- Women may have changes in menstrual patterns
- Can take some time for fertility to return to normal



Sterilisation (male and female)

- Over 99% effective
- Permanent method of contraception that involves no hormones

- Cannot be easily reversed
- Involves an operation / procedure
- Sterilisation is not effective immediately



For more information on contraceptive choices visit

www.talkchoice.co.uk

Please remember that you should always consult your doctor or another suitably trained healthcare professional when considering what type of contraception is most appropriate for you