

Birth Control Methods

Thinking about birth control is part of thinking about having intercourse. Choosing a method of birth control is not always easy. In addition to thinking about the effectiveness, benefits, and possible side-effects of the methods you're considering, you need to think about what you feel comfortable using. What methods realistically fit with your personality and lifestyle? Talking about birth control with a partner can be hard. It may help to try and sort your own feelings before you bring up the subject with your partner. Try to find a time and way to talk about it that feels comfortable to you.

Method Also see "What if Your Method Fails"	Effectiveness	How to Obtain	STI Protection	Other Considerations
Birth Control Pill	95-99%*	*Available at SHS Pharmacy *Call 438-2778 for appointment	No	*Provides continuous protection *Must be taken same time every day *Regulates menstrual cycle *May cause breakthrough bleeding, breast tenderness, nausea, decrease in cramps & flow, mood changes
Patch (Ortho-Evra)	99%*	*Available at SHS Pharmacy *Call 438-2778 for appointment	No	*Weekly hormonal birth control patch worn on skin *Provides continuous protection *May cause breakthrough bleeding, breast tenderness, nausea, decrease in cramps & flow, mood changes
Nuva-Ring	99.3%*	*Available at SHS pharmacy *Call 438-2778 for appointment	No	*Ring will be inserted into vagina for three weeks and removed for one week *Ability to become pregnant quickly returns once use of ring is stopped *May cause bleeding between periods, nausea, breast tenderness, & mood changes
DepoProvera (DMPA, Hormonal Injections)	97-99.7%*	*Approved in 1992 *Available at SHS Pharmacy *Call 438-2778 for appointment	No	*One shot every 3 months *Does not contain estrogen *May cause irregular bleeding, weight gain, headaches, & mood changes. *May not be able to get pregnant for 18-24 months after shots are stopped *Longer than 2 yrs use may lead to thinning of bones
Latex / Non Latex Condom	76-97%*	*Available at SHS pharmacy	Yes, most effective	*Use with water based lubricants such as KY Jelly *Should not be used with oil based lubricants *Most effective if used every time and before genital contact
IUD (Intrauterine Device)	98-99.9%*	*Call for information	No	*Provides continuous protection *May cause heavier bleeding/severe cramps *Not all women are good candidates

Fertility Awareness (Natural Family Planning/Rhythm Method)	75-99%*	*For more info, contact Planned Parenthood at 827-4014, or Catholic Social Services at 829-6307	No	*Requires instruction, good record keeping, and back up method or abstinence during fertile part of cycle *Stress, fever, vaginal infection, or irregular cycle can affect fertility *Acceptable to couples with religious or moral concerns about birth control
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*Percentages have been obtained from Planned Parenthood as of 3/03

What Does “Effectiveness Rates” Mean?

A range of effectiveness has been listed for each method of birth control in this handout. The lower rating listed is the “typical effectiveness”, which takes into account incorrect or inconsistent use. The higher number is the “theoretical effectiveness” rate, which represents the method’s effectiveness when used correctly every time a couple has intercourse. Effectiveness statistics are difficult to evaluate because they vary widely depending on the design of the research study. The method with the highest effectiveness rating may not be the best method for you. The best method is the one which you are informed about, comfortable with, and will use consistently.

What If Your Method Fails?

Correct and consistent use of your birth control method makes it less likely to fail; however, no method is perfect. In the event that your method of birth control fails, the method below can be used to reduce your risk of pregnancy. To obtain more information about the availability of emergency contraception, call Nurse Consult (438-7676) or Appointments (438-2778).

Method	Effectiveness	How to obtain	STI protection	Other Considerations
Emergency Contraception (Plan B)	89%	*Available at SHS	N/A	*Use when contraceptive fails: condom breaks, missed pills, late Depo-Provera shot, ejaculation on external genitalia *Use in case of sexual assault

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