

## Birth Control Methods

### How do birth control methods work?

Birth control methods work in different ways, depending on the type.

Hormonal birth control works by:

- Stopping ovaries from releasing an egg cell.
- Preventing the sperm and the egg cell from meeting.
- Thinning the lining of the uterus so that a fertilized egg cell does not stick to it.
- Thickening cervical mucous to make it harder for sperm reach the egg cell.

Barrier methods (condoms) work by:

- Creating a barrier so that ejaculation (cum), which contains sperm, does not enter a partner's body.
- Condoms also help prevent against Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and HIV.

### How does pregnancy happen?

- Pregnancy can happen when sperm connects with an egg cell. This is called fertilization. The fertilized egg travels into the uterus. If the fertilized egg attaches to the uterine lining a pregnancy happens.
- Sperm comes out of a penis when ejaculating during sexual arousal. Sometimes this substance is called semen or cum.
- Egg cells are stored in the ovaries and released into the fallopian tubes.
- If a penis ejaculates in or near a vagina, sperm might enter their partner's reproductive system, which could create a pregnancy.

### What kinds of birth control are there?

There are many different methods of birth control. Some do not require a prescription. You can buy these at a pharmacy (drugstore), grocery store or online:

- External condom
- Internal condom
- Emergency contraceptive pill (can be used up to 5 days after sex)

You must see a health care provider for the following methods of birth control:

- The birth control pill (oral contraceptives)
- The birth control patch
- The birth control shot
- An IUD/S
- Vaginal ring
- Permanent birth control

## How do I decide what birth control method to use?

This is a personal choice based around your health, your body, and how often you want to use/replace the birth control. You might want to consider the following questions when choosing a method:

- How does the method work?
- How often do I want to think about taking/replacing the method?
- Do I need to see a health care provider to get it?
- How well does the method work to prevent pregnancy?
- Does the method help prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs)?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the method?
- Is there anything about the method that will discourage me from using it correctly?
- Do I have any health problems that I need to think about when choosing a method?
- Does the provincial health care plan, Treaty, or personal health insurance pay for it? If not, can I afford the cost?
- Will my partner(s) help pay for some of the cost?
- What are my birth control needs at this time in my life? How do I feel about an unplanned pregnancy?
- Will my partner(s) support my choice? Do I need a discreet method?
- Am I opposed to any methods because of personal beliefs?
- Do I have other health considerations that may affect my choice?

## What are some other things to remember?

- Birth control is not one size fits all. What works for one person may not work as well for someone else. Sometimes you need to try a few different options before you find the one that works for you.
- Hormonal birth control can have side effects. Talk with your health care provider about different options.

## Where can I get more information?

- From your health care provider, community health clinic, or public health nurse. If you need a regular health care provider, call the Family Doctor Finder at 204-786-7111.
- From the Facts of Life Online: e-mail your questions to [thefactsoflife@serc.mb.ca](mailto:thefactsoflife@serc.mb.ca).
- From a Teen Clinic if you are 21 or younger.
- Online at [www.serc.mb.ca](http://www.serc.mb.ca) or our youth website, [www.teentalk.ca](http://www.teentalk.ca).