

Birth Control Methods

How do birth control methods work?

It depends 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 doesn't stick to it.
- Thickening cervical mucous to make it harder for sperm to reach the egg cell.

Condoms work by:

- Creating a barrier so that ejaculation (cum), which contains sperm, does not enter a partner's body.
- Condoms also help prevent 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 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 the 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 healthcare provider for the following methods of birth control:

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

How do I decide what birth control method to use?

This is a personal choice based on your health, your body, and how often you want to use/replace 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 healthcare 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 healthcare 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 healthcare provider, call the Family Doctor Finder at 204-786-7111.
- From the Facts of Life (SERC): E-mail your questions to thefactsoflife@serc.mb.ca.
- From a Teen Clinic if you are 21 or younger
- Online at www.serc.mb.ca or our youth website, www.teentalk.ca

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