

Pulling Out (Withdrawal)

What is pulling out?

Pulling out is when the penis is pulled out of the vagina before ejaculation. It is used during vaginal sex to reduce the risk of pregnancy. A person must not ejaculate (cum) near the genitals because pregnancy can happen if sperm gets in the opening of the vagina. It is also sometimes called the withdrawal method.

How well does pulling out work?

- With typical use (this means not following the exact directions) pulling out is **78%** effective.
- With perfect use (this means you follow the exact directions all the time) pulling out is **96%** effective.
- Pulling out doesn't protect you from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or HIV.

How do I use pulling out to prevent pregnancy?

You might choose pulling out as a method of birth control if you:

- don't have another type of birth control available (e.g., condoms, hormonal birth control).
- have religious, cultural, or health reasons for not using other types of birth control.
- want to improve the effectiveness of other methods of birth control by adding pulling out.
- are comfortable with a higher risk of unplanned pregnancy.

Pulling out takes a high level of body awareness and control. To use pulling out:

1. Pay attention to when you are about to ejaculate.
2. When you are almost ready to ejaculate, pull the penis out of the vagina and away from the genitals.
3. After ejaculating, wash your hands before touching your partner's genitals.
4. If pulling out fails (cum is near the genitals or in the vagina), get **emergency contraception** as soon as possible to help prevent pregnancy.

What are the benefits of pulling out?

- It doesn't require hormones or medical devices.
- It provides a birth control option for people who have personal, religious, cultural, or health reasons for not using other types of birth control.
- It's available when you don't have other types of birth control prepared or available.

What are the disadvantages of pulling out?

- It requires self-control and a high level of trust for both partners. It can be hard to stop and pull out the penis before ejaculation.
- If you have trouble with premature ejaculation, it's not a good idea to use pulling out as a method of birth control.
- It might decrease pleasure for both partners.

Did You Know

- You have the right to decide to have sex or not. Talk with your partner(s) about consent.
- There's an 85% chance of becoming pregnant within one year if no birth control is used for vaginal sex.
- Use a condom/barrier every time you have sex (oral, vaginal, anal). Condoms help prevent pregnancy, STIs and HIV.
- You can lower your risk of HIV by taking an HIV prevention pill every day. Many Albertans can get it for free. Visit www.prepalberta.ca to find out more.
- Transgender and gender diverse people who have a uterus can use hormonal birth control. It can help prevent pregnancy and make periods lighter and less painful.

Websites

- ahs.ca/srh
- ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca
- TeachingSexualHealth.ca
- myhealth.alberta.ca
- sexandu.ca

For 24/7 nurse advice and general health information, call Health Link at 811.



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