

Birth Control Choices

What is birth control?

Birth control is used to help prevent pregnancy. It's also called contraception.

- There's an 85% chance of becoming pregnant within one year if no birth control is used for vaginal sex.
- There's a risk of pregnancy any time sperm is near the genital area.
- Birth control is safe for most people to use for a long time.
- You can get pregnant as soon as you stop using most types of birth control.
- Use a condom/barrier every time you have sex (oral, vaginal, anal). Condoms help prevent pregnancy, STIs and HIV.

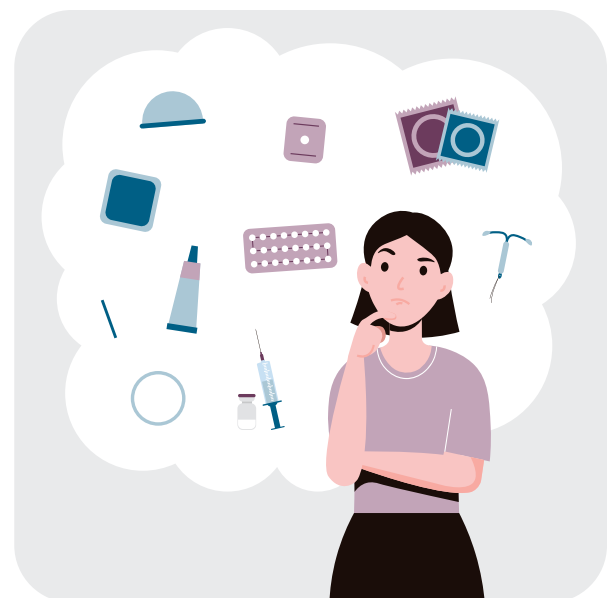
What types of birth control are there?

Long-acting methods

- **Intrauterine device (IUD):** A T-shaped device with hormone or copper, that's put into the uterus and works for up to 3 to 10 years, depending on the type.
- **Birth control implant:** a thin rod with hormone, that's put under the skin of the upper arm and works for up to 3 years.

Short-acting methods

- **Birth control pills:** A hormone pill that's taken every day at the same time.
- **Birth control patch:** A small patch that contains two types of hormones, that is put on the skin and replaced once a week.
- **Birth control ring:** A non-latex ring that contains two types of hormones, that is put in the vagina and replaced once a month.
- **Birth control injection:** a hormone injection (shot) that's given into the upper arm or hip muscle every 12 weeks.



Emergency contraception (EC)

Helps prevent pregnancy after vaginal sex without a condom or if you're not sure you're protected from pregnancy (e.g., condom breaks, missed pills).

- **Copper IUD:** The most effective method, which is put into the uterus by a provider up to 7 days after sex and provides ongoing birth control.
- **EC pills:** They work best if taken within 24 hours but can be taken up to 5 days after vaginal sex. The kind that doesn't need a prescription is available at most drug stores or sexual health clinics. For some people, prescription ones may work better. EC pills don't provide ongoing birth control.

Methods that also give STI protection

- **External condom:** A thin covering that fits over an erect penis.
- **Internal condom:** A non-latex sleeve that goes inside the vagina. Sometimes called a vaginal condom.

Permanent Birth Control

Talk to your health care provider for more information about these procedures.

- A **vasectomy** blocks sperm from getting into semen.
- A **tubal ligation** blocks an egg and sperm from meeting.

Other Methods of Birth Control

Talk to your health care provider if you're interested in learning about these methods:

- spermicides
- diaphragm
- fertility awareness methods
- lactation amenorrhea method (LAM)

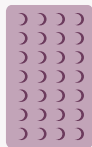
Birth Control Methods



Condom



Internal
Condom



Birth
Control Pills



Birth Control Ring



IUD



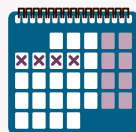
Vasectomy
or Tubal Ligation



Implant



Birth Control
Injection



Fertility Awareness
Methods



Birth Control
Patch



Diaphragm

Which birth control is the best?

- Most birth control works well when used the right way.
- The best method of birth control is the one that fits your lifestyle and that you can use consistently and correctly.
- Research shows that long-acting methods (e.g., IUD, implant) work best to prevent pregnancy because they're easier to use correctly.

It's a good idea to talk with your health care provider because:

- you need a prescription for some types of birth control.
- some people may not be able to use estrogen found in some types of birth control.
- some types of birth control can be used to help other problems like acne and heavy or painful periods.
- they can help you find the most effective method that fits your lifestyle.
- if you've recently had a baby or are breast/chest feeding, you can only use some types of birth control.

What else can I talk to my health care provider about?

You can talk with your provider about:

- cervical cancer screening.
- vaccines (e.g., HPV, Hep A&B).
- STI testing and treatment.
- pregnancy testing and options.
- any topic that is important to you (e.g., relationships, mental wellness, substance use).

Did You Know

- You have the right to decide to have sex or not. Talk with your partner(s) about consent.
- 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](tel:811).

