

Grade 8

Birth Control



Learner Outcomes

W-8.14 *Identify and describe basic types of contraceptives; i.e., abstinence, condom, foam, birth control pills*

W-8.1 Examine the relationship between choices and resulting consequences

W-8.2 Analyze the impact of positive and changing choices on health throughout the life span

R-8.6 Describe and provide examples of ethical behaviour in relationships

This lesson addresses all of the specific outcomes listed above. Instruction in human sexuality (***bolded and italicized*** outcomes) requires schools to provide notice to parents about the learning outcomes, topics and resources.

How To Use

This lesson plan contains several activities to achieve the learner outcomes above. You may choose to do some or all of the activities, based on the needs of your students and the time available. Some of the activities build on the ones that come before them, but all can be used alone.

For a quick lesson, combine activities A, D and F.

Classroom Activities & Timing

- A. Ground Rules (5-10 minutes)
- B. Abstinence and Sexual Activity Discussion (15-20 minutes)
- C. Birth Control Kahoot! Quiz (20-25 minutes)
- D. Birth Control Kit (15-20 minutes)
- E. Birth Control Methods Chart (30-45 minutes)
- F. Question Box (5-10 minutes)

See also the [*Differing Abilities*](#) lesson plan on *Preventing Pregnancy*.

Required Materials

[KAHOOT! QUIZ](#) and ANSWER KEY: Grade 8 Birth Control

HANDOUTS: [Birth Control Kit](#)

HANDOUT: Which Birth Control Methods Protect Against STIs?

[DIAGRAMS](#): Reproductive Systems, Fertilization, Implantation, Sperm Production

HANDOUT and ANSWER KEY: Birth Control Methods Chart

HANDOUTS: [Birth Control Health Information Sheets](#)

All the diagrams are also available as slides in [Grade 8 Diagrams](#).

Background Information for Teachers

Abstinence and Birth Control

The only sure way to avoid pregnancy is to abstain from any activity where a penis or semen are near the vaginal area (including anal and vaginal sex or penis/vaginal touching). The only sure way to avoid STBBIs (sexually transmitted and blood borne infections) is to abstain from any activity that involves sexual contact between one person's body and another person's genital area, semen, vaginal fluid or blood.

For students who engage in sexual activity, these strategies can reduce the risk of pregnancy:

- Choosing sexual activities that cannot lead to pregnancy (e.g., mutual masturbation, oral sex)
- Correctly and consistently using dual protection. Condom plus another method of birth control increases birth control effectiveness and also reduces the risk for STBBIs.
- Clear communication with partners about intentions, limits and safer sex

For students who engage in sexual activity, these strategies can reduce the risk of STBBIs:

- Limiting sexual partners
- Correctly and consistently using barriers (internal and external condoms, dental dams) to reduce transmission
- Getting vaccinated against hepatitis B & human papillomavirus (HPV)
- Getting regular testing, and subsequent treatment if needed
- Clear communication between partners about sexual history, testing and treatment
- Using PrEP if at high risk for HIV

Educational programs that result in the most positive sexual health outcomes (e.g. delayed first intercourse, safer sex strategies, healthy relationships, consensual activity) and are the best at reducing negative sexual health outcomes (e.g. unintended pregnancy, STBBI) are programs that are comprehensive and include information about birth control, relationships, sexual decision-making & STBBI prevention.

For the most up-to-date information about birth control methods, see the [Birth Control Health Information Sheets](#). These sheets are not included in this lesson plan, as they are updated frequently. Using the link will ensure access to the most recent version of each Health Information Sheet.

Birth control methods can be grouped in different ways. For example, in the past educators often divided birth control methods into groups based on how they prevented pregnancy (barrier, hormonal, spermicides and other).

Recently, health educators are grouping birth control methods into a different set of categories, in part to emphasize the high effectiveness of long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs) over time:

Long acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs)	Short acting reversible contraceptives (SARCs)	Used in the moment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth control implant • Copper IUD • Hormonal IUD 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birth control injection • Birth control patch • Birth control pill • Birth control ring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Abstinence • Diaphragm* • External Condom • Fertility awareness • Internal Condom • Vaginal spermicide** • Withdrawal

*Diaphragms are rarely used in Canada, as the required spermicidal jelly is no longer available.

**Vaginal spermicides come as film or foam. It is recommended that vaginal spermicides be used with another form of birth control such as condoms.

Inclusive Language

Language is complex, evolving, and powerful. In these lessons, [inclusive language](#) is used to include all students, including those with diverse gender identities, gender expressions and sexual orientations. This includes the use of 'they' as a singular gender-neutral pronoun.

A person's sex can be assigned at birth as male or female. Some people are intersex (the reproductive, sexual, or genetic biology of a person is unclear, not exclusively male or female or otherwise does not fit within traditional definitions of male or female). Assigned sex is independent of gender.

Gender identity is a person's internal sense of identity as girl/woman, boy/man, fluid among genders or no gender (regardless of what sex they were assigned at birth).

For many people, their gender is the same as the sex they were assigned at birth (cisgender). For others, their gender identity is different from the sex they were assigned at birth. They may use terms like transgender, trans, non-binary, gender fluid, gender queer, agender or others, to describe their gender identity. The umbrella term 'trans' is primarily used here, to describe people whose gender identity and sex assigned at birth differ. While this umbrella term does not fit everyone, the intention is to be as inclusive as possible.

When teaching about birth control, it is important not to assume that sexual orientation or gender identity defines a person's sexual behaviours. Research shows that gay and lesbian students are at risk for pregnancy and STIs. To be inclusive of all students, be clear about using dual protection of condoms/latex barriers for STI protection and another method of birth control (e.g., the pill) for those at risk of pregnancy.

A. Ground Rules

Ensure [ground rules](#) are established before beginning this lesson. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can help ensure a successful lesson.

B. Abstinence and Sexual Activity Discussion

The discussion questions help students begin to examine abstinence, sexual activity and birth control. Comprehensive background information for each method can be found in the [Birth Control Health Information Sheets](#).

What is birth control?

- Birth control refers to the different methods used to prevent pregnancy.
- Some forms of birth control also protect against STIs.
- There are many different types of birth control.
- Hormonal birth control methods have hormones that prevent a pregnancy by stopping the ovaries from releasing an egg or alter the uterine lining or cervical mucus.
- Non-hormonal birth control methods create a barrier between sperm and the egg, change the chemistry of the reproductive tract or do both.
- Other methods of birth control do not involve medications or devices to prevent pregnancy. They prevent a pregnancy by

Cultural and religious values influence our individual decisions. It is important to realize that these values may be reflected in the attitudes of students in the class and teens may be struggling with sexual decision making. Some adolescents may not agree with sex before marriage or the use of different birth control methods.

using certain behaviours and/or paying close attention to a person's body and menstrual cycle.

Why is it important to learn about birth control?

- Factual information is critical to make healthy decisions now and in the future.
- Birth control methods help to prevent pregnancy. Some methods also protect against STIs.
- The majority of youth are not sexually active, but learning the information about birth control before becoming sexually active helps prevent unintended pregnancies. A [national study of Canadian teens](#) in 2018 revealed that only about 16% of grade 9 students reported having had sex. About 26% of grade 10 students reported having had sex.
- All students benefit from understanding birth control methods and the role of abstinence and condoms/dental dams for STBBI protection no matter their sex assigned at birth, gender identity, gender expression or sexual orientation.
- Many people use hormonal birth control methods like the pill for other reasons, such as to regulate menstrual cycles or limit PMS symptoms (cramping, heavy periods, acne etc.)

Can you identify/describe some methods of birth control?

- List the methods identified by students on the board under the heading **Methods of Birth Control**.
- If students need prompting to get started, display the [Birth Control Tool](#)

What is abstinence?

*Keep in mind that **virginity** is a social construct and relates to personal values and opinions, not biological facts. Virginity means different things to different people and may be defined differently among a variety of religions and cultures.*

- Abstinence can mean different things to different people. For some, it means having no sexual contact with other people. For others, it could mean having limited contact, allowing some sexual activities, but not sex (anal, oral or vaginal).
- Abstinence is often referred to as being 100% safe, meaning that it completely eliminates the risk of STIs and unintended pregnancy. This is only true if the definition includes eliminating any intimate sexual activities involving skin to genital (including oral and anal sex), genital to genital or body fluid to genital contact.
- Pregnancy can also occur without intercourse if sperm is ejaculated near the entrance of the vagina during sexual touching.
- Oral sex and anal sex are sex. A person can get an STI from oral sex or anal sex.

If a teen did have sex, would that mean that they could no longer be abstinent?

- No. Being abstinent does not necessarily mean a person has never engaged in sexual intercourse. Someone who is abstinent may have had sex in the past, but is not currently sexually active. The choice to be abstinent can be made at any time, regardless of past experience.

C. Birth Control Kahoot! Quiz

This quiz can be used as a pre-and post-test, a review, wrap-up of the unit or a fun energizer between other activities. For more information on using Kahoot!, visit kahoot.com

1. Open the Kahoot! Quiz: [Grade 8 Birth Control](#)
2. As a class, answer the quiz questions and discuss the answers together. You can play the quiz in individual or team mode.

D. Birth Control Kit

The [Birth Control Kit](#) can be downloaded and printed for use in the classroom. Some schools/teachers may also be able to borrow a kit from the nurse/community health centre assigned to the school.

The birth control kit contains one page of pictures and one page with general information for each of the following birth control methods:

- Abstinence
- Birth Control Implant
- Birth Control Injection
- Birth Control Patch
- Birth Control Pill
- Birth Control Ring
- Emergency Contraception
- External Condom
- Fertility Awareness
- Internal Condom
- Intrauterine Device (IUD)
- No Method
- Tubal Ligation
- Vasectomy
- Withdrawal

For more information on each method of birth control, see the [Birth Control Health Information Sheets](#).

Some methods of birth control are controversial for some students based on their belief systems. It is important to be sensitive to various belief systems when discussing birth control.

The effectiveness rate of each birth control method is given for typical use. Most methods have a higher “perfect use” rate. For a comparison of typical vs. perfect use, see the [Birth Control Effectiveness Graph](#).

1. Print all the pages of the birth control kit single-sided. Consider using card stock or laminating the pages.
2. On the general information pages, cover up the name of the birth control method using tape.
3. Give each student one page from the kit. Some students will have pictures, some will have general information pages. If there are not enough pages for every student, have some students share or print additional copies of some methods.
4. Ask the students with the picture pages to move about the room and find the person who has the corresponding information page for that method of birth control.
5. When all the pairs are matched, check and make sure that each pair has correctly matched the picture and the information page for the same birth control method. Make any changes as needed.
6. Ask each pair to form a group of four with another pair.
7. Ask each group of four to decide if the methods they have offer fair, good or excellent protection against pregnancy and STIs with typical use. You can define fair, good and excellent for them, or encourage students to make their own judgements.
8. Display or handout copies of the [Which Birth Control Methods Protect Against STIs?](#) table for groups to check their answers.
9. Introduce the categories of SARC/LARC/Used in the moment by posting titles around the room and explaining their meanings (see Background Information for more).
10. When explaining different birth control methods, you may find it helpful to review reproductive anatomy and physiology using the diagrams in the Grade 8 Diagrams PowerPoint.
11. Ask each group to decide which category they think their cards belong in and post them with those titles.
12. Debrief this activity. Questions can include:

What do you think is the best method of birth control? Why?

- The best method of birth control is one a person uses correctly and consistently.
- If someone is sexually active, dual protection is the most effective strategy. Dual protection means using an internal or external condom

to decrease the chances of getting an STI, and using another method of birth control (such as the pill, patch, ring, implant or IUD) to prevent pregnancy.

- Abstinence is the only 100% effective method, but it must be used consistently to be that effective. There is no data on the effectiveness of the typical use of abstinence.
- Ensure students know that using two condoms at the same time is not better than using one. Using two condoms actually increases the risk of pregnancy or STIs because friction may cause one or both condoms to break. This is also true for internal (vaginal) condoms, or using an external condom and internal condom at the same time.

In a sexual relationship, who is responsible to ensure birth control is used?

- Using birth control is a shared responsibility, especially as dual protection is the most effective way to prevent unintended pregnancies and STIs. Although a number of birth control methods are designed for people who ovulate/have a uterus, it is the responsibility of both parties to be informed about proper use.
- Being open and honest with sexual partners about the use of birth control is part of ethical behaviour in relationships.
- Telling a partner you are taking birth control when you are not, telling a partner you don't have an STI when you do, promising to 'pull out' with no intention of doing so or removing a condom without your partner's knowledge, are examples of unethical behaviour in sexual relationships.

E. Birth Control Methods Chart

1. Print 6 copies each of the [Birth Control Health Information Sheets](#) for the following methods
 - Abstinence
 - Birth Control Injection
 - Birth Control Pill
 - Birth Control Patch
 - Birth Control Ring (Vaginal Contraceptive Ring)
 - Emergency Contraception
 - External Condom
 - Implant
 - Internal Condom
 - IUD
 - Withdrawal
2. Divide students into groups of five.
3. Give each student a **Birth Control Methods** handout.

4. Use the [jigsaw](#) method to have students complete the chart with details about each birth control method.
5. Students will need to know what ‘getting a prescription’ means to complete this activity. It may be helpful to review ways teens can access health care independently, such as birth control clinics or family doctor visits.
6. You may find it helpful to review reproductive anatomy and physiology, using the **Reproductive System** diagrams, when discussing different birth control methods.
7. Debrief this activity using the following questions:
 - What do you think is the best method of birth control? Why? Has your answer changed from the previous activity, now that you know more about each method?
 - What do you think is the best method of protecting yourself from an STI? Has your answer changed from the previous activity, now that you know more about each method?

F. Question Box

Answer any questions from the [question box](#) in the previous lesson. Have students submit any new questions and address them next class.

Addressing the questions at the next class allows you time to review the questions and prepare responses.

Self-Reflection

During the lesson, were:

- ground rules being followed?
- good practices established regarding group work and discussion?

What will you change for future classes with this group?

What will you change for future use of this lesson?

Student Assessment

During the lesson, did students:

Knowledge:

- define birth control and abstinence?

- identify pressures that could lead to sexual activity and ways to respond to sexual pressure?
- describe basic methods of birth control?

Skills:

- describe how to access common methods of birth control?

Attitudes:

- decide what personal actions are going to be followed?
- decide what method(s) is/are best used to protect against pregnancy and STIs?

ANSWER KEY: Grade 8 Birth Control Quiz

Correct answers are in bold text.

1. Common birth control methods include:

- **Pill**
- **Patch**
- **Implant**
- **IUD**

All of these are commonly used birth control methods.

2. Using both a condom and the pill is considered a very effective birth control method.

- **True**
- False
- Unsure
- Nobody knows

An added advantage is that using a condom provides good STI protection.

3. The IUD is a very effective method of birth control.

- **True**
- False
- Unsure
- Nobody knows

With typical use an IUD is 99.2% (Copper IUD) to 99.8% (Hormonal IUD) effective.

4. Menstrual products can be used as birth control.

- True
- **False**
- Unsure

Menstrual products include tampons, pads, menstrual underwear (period panties) and menstrual cups. None of these products are birth control methods. Having vaginal sex with a tampon or menstrual cup inserted can lead to significant pain or discomfort for one or both partners, and may increase the risk of toxic shock syndrome.

5. A person can become pregnant without having sex.

- **True**
- False

TRUE. Even if there is no vaginal penetration, sperm can enter the vagina if ejaculation occurs near the vagina or on an area of the body brought in contact with the vagina. Also many people become pregnant without sex, by using assisted reproductive technologies like in vitro fertilization.

Kahoot! Quiz Answer Key

6. Withdrawal is a highly effective birth control method.

- True
- **False**

There can be sperm cells contained within pre-ejaculate which is released from the penis prior to ejaculation. These sperm cells can cause pregnancy. With typical use, withdrawal is about 78% effective, which is not considered highly effective.

7. The most effective method of birth control in this list is:

- Pill
- Condom
- Ring
- **Implant**

With typical use, the implant is 99.95% effective. The pill, patch and ring are about 91% effective. Condoms are about 82% effective.

8. After ejaculation, sperm can live 3 to 5 days.

- **True**
- False
- Unsure
- False but...

Sperm can live in the uterus and fallopian tubes for about 3 to 5 days after ejaculation. This is why some people may become pregnant even if they ovulated days after sex occurred.

9. A person cannot get pregnant if they have sex during their period.

- True
- **False**

There is no time that is considered 100% safe for sex in order to avoid a pregnancy. Every person's cycle is different and ovulation can occur at any time during the menstrual cycle. It is recommended that birth control is used throughout the menstrual cycle to prevent an unintended pregnancy.

10. The birth control pill, patch or ring may regulate menstrual periods or reduce cramps.

- **True**
- False
-

Many people use the pill, patch or ring for these reasons, even if they aren't sexually active or need birth control to prevent pregnancy.

11. Emergency contraception can be used:

- **After unprotected vaginal sex**
- **By someone who forgot to use birth control**
- Up to 3 weeks after sex

Kahoot! Quiz Answer Key

- **If a condom broke during sex**

Emergency Contraception (EC) helps prevent pregnancy if you've had unprotected sex or you're not sure if you're protected from pregnancy.

EC should be used as soon as possible after unprotected sex. Emergency contraception can be used up to 5 days (EC pills) or 7 days (copper IUD) after unprotected sex.

Anyone can buy emergency contraception pills at a pharmacy, without a prescription.

Birth Control Methods and STI Protection

Method	STI Protection	Pregnancy Prevention (Typical use) *
Abstinence (perfect use)	✓✓✓	✓✓✓
Emergency Contraception	✗	✓**
External (male) Condom	✓✓	✓
Implant	✗	✓✓✓
Injection	✗	✓✓
Internal (vaginal) Condom	✓✓	✓
IUD	✗	✓✓✓
Pill/Patch/Ring	✗	✓✓
Tubal Ligation	✗	✓✓✓
Vaginal Spermicides	✗	✓
Vasectomy	✗	✓✓✓
Withdrawal	✗	✓

✓ = Fair, ✓✓ = Good, ✓✓✓ = Excellent, ✗ = none

Birth Control Methods and STI Protection

For birth control methods:

Excellent = 99% or higher ✓✓✓
Good = 90%-98% ✓✓
Fair = 70%-89% ✓

*Some birth control methods have much higher effectiveness in 'perfect use' conditions. For a comparison of the difference between perfect and typical use, see the [Birth Control Effectiveness Graph](#).

** The contraceptive effectiveness rate for emergency contraception depends on what kind is used, and how soon after unprotected sex the method is used. See the [Health Information Sheet](#) on emergency contraception for more information.

Birth Control Methods

Method	Check here if a prescription is needed	Check here if anyone can buy this in a drugstore	List two advantages of this method	Effectiveness rate with typical use?	Check here if it provides protection from STIs
Abstinence					
Birth Control Injection					
Birth Control Patch					

Name: _____

Method	Check here if a prescription is needed	Check here if anyone can buy this in a drugstore	List two advantages of this method	Effectiveness rate with typical use?	Check here if it provides protection from STIs
Birth Control Pill					
Birth Control Ring					
Emergency Contraception					
External Condom					

Name: _____

Method	Check here if a prescription is needed	Check here if anyone can buy this in a drugstore	List two advantages of this method	Effectiveness rate with typical use?	Check here if it provides protection from STIs
Implant					
Internal Condom					
IUD					
Withdrawal					

Answer Key

Method	Check here if a prescription is needed	Check here if anyone can buy this in a drugstore	List two advantages of this method	Effectiveness rate with typical use?	Check here if it provides protection from STIs
Abstinence			Answers will vary, could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing to buy, no prescription needed • Is 100% effective if used correctly • Also gives STI protection 	100% (perfect use)	✓
Birth Control Injection	✓		Answers will vary, could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One injection lasts 12 weeks • Might decrease period cramps or PMS • Periods might be lighter or not happen 	94%	
Birth Control Patch	✓		Answers will vary, could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periods might be lighter, more regular • Might decrease period cramps • One patch lasts for 1 week 	91%	
Birth Control Pill	✓		Answers will vary, could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periods might be lighter or more regular • Might decrease period cramps • Might help decrease acne 	91%	

Method	Check here if a prescription is needed	Check here if anyone can buy this in a drugstore	List two advantages of this method	Effectiveness rate with typical use?	Check here if it provides protection from STIs
Birth Control Ring	✓		Answers will vary, could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May decrease period cramps • Periods may be lighter or more regular • May help decrease acne 	91%	
Emergency Contraception	✓ Copper IUD, Ella	✓ Plan B, NorLevo, Next Choice, Option2	Answers will vary, could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can prevent pregnancy if other method failed or was forgotten • Can be used up to 5 days after unprotected sex, depending on type 	50-99% depending on the method	
External Condom		✓	Answers will vary, could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easy to find in stores • Protects against STIs • Small and easy to keep on hand 	82%	✓
Implant	✓		Answers will vary, could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can last up to 3 years • May decrease period cramps • Periods may be lighter or not happen at all 	99.9%	
Internal Condom		✓	Answers will vary, could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protects against STIs • Can be put in up to 8 hours before sex • Can be used with any type of lubricant 	79%	✓

Name: _____

Method	Check here if a prescription is needed	Check here if anyone can buy this in a drugstore	List two advantages of this method	Effectiveness rate with typical use?	Check here if it provides protection from STIs
IUD	✓		Answers will vary, could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Can work for 3-10 years• May decrease period cramps• Periods might be lighter or more regular	99%	
Withdrawal			Answers will vary, could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Available in any situation• Better than using no birth control• Free	78%	