

# Withdrawal (Pulling Out)

## What is withdrawal?

Withdrawal is used during sex to reduce the risk of pregnancy. Withdrawal is when the penis is pulled out of the vagina before ejaculation (cum). A person must not ejaculate near the genitals. Pregnancy can occur if the cum is near the opening of the vagina and sperm gets in.

## How well does withdrawal work?

- There's about an **85%** chance of getting pregnant after 1 year of having unprotected sex.
- With typical use (this means not following the exact directions) withdrawal is **78%** effective.
- With perfect use (this means you follow the exact directions all the time) withdrawal is **96%** effective.
- **Don't** use withdrawal if pregnancy would be hard for you or you have a medical condition where pregnancy poses an unacceptable health risk.
- If withdrawal fails (cum near genitals or in the vagina), get **emergency contraception** as soon as possible to help prevent pregnancy.
- Withdrawal doesn't protect you from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV.
- Use a condom **every time** you have sex (vaginal, oral, or anal) to lower your risk of STIs and HIV.

## Who might choose withdrawal as a method of birth control?

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

- don't have another method of birth control (e.g., condoms, hormonal birth control)
- can't afford birth control
- have religious, cultural, or health reasons for not using other birth control methods
- want to improve the effectiveness of other methods of birth control by adding withdrawal
- don't have sex often

## How do I use withdrawal?

- A person must know when they are about to ejaculate.
- When a person is almost ready to ejaculate, they need to pull the penis out of the vagina and away from the genitals.
- After ejaculating, wash your hands before touching your partner's genitals.

## **What are the benefits of withdrawal?**

- It's better than using no birth control at all.
- It's available in any situation.

## **What are the disadvantages of withdrawal?**

- It requires self-control for both partners. It can be very hard to stop and withdraw the penis before ejaculation.
- If a person has trouble with premature ejaculation, it's not a good idea to use withdrawal as a method of birth control.
- It might decrease pleasure for both partners.

## **Did You Know**

- You have the right to make the decision to have sex or not.
- Plan ahead and talk to your partner about how to protect yourself and lower your risk of pregnancy, STIs, and HIV. Use a condom every time you have sex.
- Many sexual health clinics offer some types of birth control for no cost for those who qualify.

## **Websites**

- [ahs.ca/srh](http://ahs.ca/srh)
- [myhealth.alberta.ca](http://myhealth.alberta.ca)
- [ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca](http://ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca)
- [sexandu.ca](http://sexandu.ca)
- [teachingsexualhealth.ca](http://teachingsexualhealth.ca)

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