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
- myhealth.alberta.ca
- ReadyOrNotAlberta.ca
- sexandu.ca
- teachingsexualhealth.ca

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