## Contraceptive Methods Chart - Answer Key

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>What is it?</th>
<th>Is a prescription needed?</th>
<th>Advantages and things to think about</th>
<th>What is this method’s effectiveness against:</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Abstinence</strong></td>
<td>Abstinence can mean different things to different people. Abstinence is often referred to as being 100% safe, meaning that it completely eliminates the risk of STI or unplanned pregnancy. This is only true if the definition includes eliminating any intimate sexual behaviour involving skin to genital, genital to genital or body fluid to genital contact.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Advantages: • Do not have to worry about pregnancy or STI. Things to think about: • Means having the ability to say “no” to sex.</td>
<td>100% effective (if used correctly)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Birth Control Injection Depo Provera®</strong></td>
<td>Depo Provera is a hormone (progestin) that is injected into the arm or buttock every 12 weeks. It stops the release of an egg and makes the mucous in the cervix (opening to the uterus) thicker so that sperm cannot enter the uterus. Pregnancy cannot occur if the body does not release an egg.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Advantages: • Convenient. • Does not interrupt sex. Things to think about: • Many women stop having periods after about 6 months. • Some women may have a delayed return to fertility once Depo is stopped (up to 2 years). • May add to the development of osteoporosis (thinning bones). • No STI protection.</td>
<td>97% - 99.7% effective No protection</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Birth Control Patch Evra®</strong></td>
<td>The birth control patch looks like a large, thin, beige bandage. The sticky side contains two hormones (estrogen and progestin) similar to the natural hormones in a woman’s body. The hormones are released continuously through the skin and stop the release of an egg from the ovaries. Pregnancy cannot occur if the body does not release an egg. The patch is changed weekly for three weeks, and then there is a one week break from the patch.</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Advantages: • Convenient. • Does not interrupt sex. Things to think about: • You must remember to change your patch weekly. • No STI protection.</td>
<td>92% - 99.7% effective No protection</td>
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| Birth Control Pill | The combined hormone birth control pill contains small amounts of two natural hormones (estrogen and progestin) that stop the release of an egg. Pregnancy cannot occur if the body does not release an egg. | ✔ | **Advantages:**  
- Convenient.  
- Does not interrupt sex.  
**Things to think about:**  
- You must remember to take the Pill as directed.  
- No STI protection | 92% - 99.7% effective | No protection |
| Chance (No Method) | No birth control method is used to prevent pregnancy during sex. | ✔ | **Advantages:**  
- Does not require any birth control supplies.  
**Things to think about:**  
- No protection from sexually STI and unintended pregnancy.  
- Fear of pregnancy and/or STI may make sex less enjoyable. | 15% effective at preventing pregnancy | No protection |
| Condoms - Female | The female condom is a non-reusable tube-like synthetic pouch that fits inside a woman's vagina. It catches semen and stops sperm from fertilizing an egg. | ✔ | **Advantages:**  
- Provides good protection against STI.  
- Can be bought at a drug store without a prescription.  
- Made of polyurethane, so good for people with latex allergies.  
**Things to think about:**  
- May be awkward to use.  
- More expensive than the male condom. | 79% - 95% effective | Good protection |
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<th>Effectiveness</th>
<th>Protection</th>
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| **Condoms - Male** | A condom is a thin latex or synthetic, non-reusable covering that fits over the erect penis. It catches the semen and stops sperm from entering the woman's body. | - Can be bought at a drug store without a prescription.  
- Provides good sexually transmitted infection (STI) protection.  
- Can be purchased at a Sexual and Reproductive Health clinic for a low cost.  
- Many agencies provide condoms free of charge.  
- Comes in a variety of colors, flavors and sizes.  
**Things to think about:**  
- Some condoms have a spermicide (Nonoxynol-9) that may cause skin and vaginal irritation, which may increase your risk of developing an STI or HIV.  
- A water based lubricant can be used with condoms to help with dryness.  
- Polyurethane condoms are available for people with latex allergies. | 85% - 98% effective | Good protection |
| **Diaphragm** | A diaphragm is made of latex. It is shaped like a saucer and has a flexible rim. It fits over the cervix (opening to the uterus) to stop sperm from entering. It must be inserted before intercourse and removed and cleaned after. | **Advantages:**  
- If inserted correctly, cannot be felt by either partner.  
- It is reusable.  
**Things to think about:**  
- A doctor must size a diaphragm.  
- The diaphragm is used with spermicidal cream or jelly. These sometimes cause irritation or itchiness which may increase your risk of developing an STI or HIV.  
- Some STI protection. | 84% - 94% effective | Some protection |
| Emergency Contraception (EC) Plan B® | Advantages:  
- Can be taken up to 5 days after unprotected sex.  
- Plan B may be available at your local pharmacy without a prescription.  
- Available at sexual and reproductive clinics at a reduced cost.  
Things to think about:  
- It works best if taken as soon as possible after unprotected sex.  
- Does not give continued protection against pregnancy.  
- No STI protection. | There are two main types of EC:  
Plan B is 95% effective when taken less than 24 hours after unprotected intercourse |  
No protection |
| Intrauterine Contraceptive Device (IUD) | Advantages:  
- Convenient.  
- Does not interrupt sex.  
- Can stay in place for 3 to 5 years but can be removed at any time.  
Things to think about:  
- Not recommended for women who are at increased risk for STI, such as those with more than one sexual partner.  
- There is a greater chance for a serious pelvic infection with an STI.  
- No STI protection. | Mirena® IUD- 99.9% effective  
Copper T® IUD- 99.2%-99.4% effective | No protection |
| Natural Family Planning/Fertility Awareness | Advantages:  
- Does not require any birth control supplies.  
Things to think about:  
- It is best to use birth control or abstain from intercourse during fertile times.  
- Special teaching is available from a doctor, nurse, or group that explains natural methods.  
- It takes several months to become familiar with your fertility cycle.  
- It is not a reliable method for women with irregular periods.  
- No STI protection. | 75%-96.25% effective | No protection |
| **The Sponge - Protectaid** | The sponge is a non-reusable piece of soft foam that is filled with spermicide and must be inserted inside the vagina before intercourse and must remain in place for six hours after intercourse. | ✔ | **Advantages:** | • Can have sex more than one time as long as the sponge remains in place for six hours after sex.  
• Can be bought at a drug store at a low cost.  
**Things to think about:**  
• More effective in preventing pregnancy if used with another birth control method.  
• May cause some vaginal irritation which may increase your risk of developing an STI (sexually transmitted infection) or HIV.  
• No STI protection. | 84-94% effective | No protection |
| **Tubal Ligation** | Tubal ligation is a permanent method of birth control that sterilizes the woman. A surgical operation is used to cut or “tie off” the fallopian tubes (the tube the egg travels through). This prevents the egg and sperm from meeting. Occasionally this method can be reversed but you need to talk to your doctor. Tubal ligation reversal can be expensive and is not covered by Alberta Health Care. | ✔ | **Advantages:** | • Highly effective immediately.  
• Does not interrupt sex or affect the sex drive.  
**Things to think about:**  
• All surgery has some risk such as bleeding, infection or effects of anesthetic.  
• No STI protection. | 99.5% effective | No protection |
| **Vaginal Contraceptive Ring (NuvaRing®)** | NuvaRing® is a soft, flexible, clear plastic ring that is inserted into the vagina, where it slowly releases two types of hormones (estrogen and progestin). These hormones are similar to a woman's natural hormones and stop the release of an egg from the ovaries. Pregnancy cannot occur if the body does not release an egg. A woman inserts and removes the ring herself. It is left in place for 21 days. After a 7 day break from the ring, a new ring is inserted. | ✔ | **Advantages:** | • Convenient.  
• Does not interrupt sex.  
• NuvaRing® is inserted into the vagina once a month.  
**Things to think about:**  
• No STI protection. | 92% - 99.7% effective | No protection |
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| Vaginal Spermicides    | There are different types of spermicides available including: contraceptive foam; contraceptive jelly; and vaginal contraceptive film (VCF). A spermicide must be inserted into the vagina before each act of intercourse. It contains an active ingredient (Nonoxynol-9) that kills sperm. | ✓                                                                         | • Can be bought at a drug store.  
• Neither partner can feel it.  

**Things to think about:**  
• May cause some vaginal irritation, which may increase your risk of developing STI or HIV.  
• More effective in preventing a pregnancy if used with another birth control method, such as a condom.  
• No STI protection. | 71% - 82% effective | No protection |
| Vasectomy              | Vasectomy is a permanent method of birth control that sterilizes the man. A surgical procedure closes the vas deferens (tubes) that carry sperm. Occasionally this method can be reversed but you need to talk to your doctor. Vasectomy reversals can be expensive and are not covered by Alberta Health Care. | ✓                                                                         | • Local anesthetic (freezing) is used.  
• Procedure takes 15 to 30 minutes.  
• Highly effective.  
• Does not interrupt sex, affect sex drive, or sexual performance.  

**Things to think about:**  
• Not effective right away. All sperm will be cleared following a number of ejaculations. Be sure to arrange a sperm test at a lab – ask the doctor about this.  
• All surgery has some risk such as bleeding or infection.  
• No STI protection. | 99.9% effective | No protection |
| Withdrawal             | Withdrawal is when a man pulls his penis out of the vagina prior to ejaculation. | ✓                                                                         | • Costs nothing.  
• Convenient.  
• Does not require any birth control supplies.  

**Things to think about:**  
• Sperm may be present in pre-ejaculate fluid.  
• No STI protection.  
• Some men have difficulty knowing when they are about to ejaculate. | 73% - 96% effective | No protection |

Adapted from:  