

Contraception is the act of preventing pregnancy. This can be a device, a medication, a procedure or a behavior.

Contraception allows a woman control of her reproductive health and affords the woman the ability to be an active participant in her family planning. Birth control methods are designed to prevent conception or interrupt or nullify implantation and growth.

Contraception can be prevented by hormonally disrupting the menstrual cycle (Oral contraceptive (OC) pills), by physically blocking the passageway (barrier methods or sterilization), or less successfully, by abstinence during fertile periods or withdrawal method.

Implantation is impaired via the use of a foreign body (intrauterine device {IUD}) or

surgical removal (Salpingectomy or Vasectomy). Medical devices used to prevent pregnancy include intrauterine devices or subdermal implants. The intrauterine device may or may not contain progesterone, and the subdermal implants all contain progesterone. These devices are commonly referred to as Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives or LARCs.

Types of contraceptives

- long-acting reversible contraception, such as the implant or intra uterine device (IUD)
- hormonal contraception, such the pill or the Depo Provera injection
- barrier methods, such as condoms
- emergency contraception
- fertility awareness
- permanent contraception,

such as vasectomy and tubal ligation.

LONG-ACTING REVERSIBLE CONTRACEPTION

Long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) is a contraceptive that lasts for a long time.

There are two types of LARC:

- the intra uterine device that lasts for five to ten years
- the implant that lasts for three or five years.

They are sometimes called “fit and forget” contraception because it doesn’t need to be remembered every day or every month.

LARCs are the most effective types of contraception. They are more than 99% effective at preventing pregnancy.

HORMONAL CONTRACEPTIVES

These are contraceptives that use hormones to prevent pregnancy.

Hormonal contraceptives include the pill and the Depo Provera injection.

There are two types of pill:

- Combined oral contraceptive pill
- Progestogen only contraceptive pill

You take one pill each day. The pill is more than 99% effective at preventing pregnancy if you take it correctly.

The Depo provera injection type of hormonal contraception. You get an injection every three months. If you get your injections on time, Depo Provera is more than 99% effective.

BARRIER METHODS

Barrier methods stop sperm from entering the vagina. The two barrier methods are:

- Condoms
- Internal condoms

Condoms protect against sexually transmissible infections as well as unintended pregnancy.

EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

There are two options for emergency contraception: the emergency contraceptive pill or a copper IUD. The copper IUD can be inserted up to five days after unprotected sex, and is more than 99% effective at preventing pregnancy.

Emergency contraception can be used to prevent pregnancy if:

- you haven't used protection
- your normal contraception

- fails e.g. condom splits
- you have missed more than one contraceptive pill
 - you have been vomiting or had diarrhoea while on the pill
 - you have missed your injection
 - you have been forced to have sex without contraception.

PERMANENT CONTRACEPTION

Permanent contraception, sometimes called sterilisation, prevents all future pregnancies. It is very difficult or impossible to reverse. Permanent contraception is either a vasectomy or a tubal ligation.