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A woman can get pregnant if a man's sperm reaches one of her eggs (ova).

Contraception tries to stop this happening by:

- keeping the egg and sperm apart
- stopping egg production
- stopping the combined sperm and egg (fertilised egg) attaching to the lining of the womb

There are different methods of contraception, including:

- 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 in Aotearoa New Zealand:

- the [intra uterine device \(IUD\)](#) 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 you don’t need to remember it every day or every month.

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

## **WHAT ARE 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](#) is another 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.

## WHAT ARE BARRIER METHODS?

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

- [condoms](#)
- [internal condoms](#)

Condoms protect against [sexually transmissible infections \(STIs\)](#) as well as unintended pregnancy.

You can buy [internal condoms](#) from our website, on other online shops and from some pharmacies.

You can get a prescription for condoms from Family Planning or your doctor, or you can buy them from our website, other online shops, pharmacies, supermarkets and other shops.

## WHAT IS EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION?

There are two options for emergency contraception: the [emergency contraceptive pill](#) (ECP) or a [copper IUD](#).

The ECP is approved to be taken up three days after unprotected sex. If you are an average weight, the ECP is 98% effective.

If you weigh more than 70kg, the ECP is less effective and a copper IUD is recommended. If you weigh more than 70kg and you choose to take ECP, you should ask if taking a double dose is the right option for you. 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.

You should not use the ECP as your regular method of contraception.

## WHAT IS 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](#).