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Contraception: The deliberate use of artificial methods or other techniques to prevent pregnancy as a consequence of sexual intercourse. The major forms of artificial contraception are: barrier methods, of which the commonest is the condom or sheath; the contraceptive pill, which contains synthetic sex hormones which prevent ovulation in the female; intrauterine devices, such as the coil, which prevent the fertilized ovum from implanting in the uterus; and male or female sterilization.

**Examples of contraceptives:**

**Combined oral contraceptive pill (COC)**

Often called ‘the pill’, the combined pill contains two hormones similar to those produced naturally by women. It is over 99% effective when used perfectly but in typical use, the rate is 91%.

**Condoms (male)**

Male condoms help protect against pregnancy and sexual transmitted infections (STIs). Used correctly, they are 98% effective but in typical use they are 82% effective. Male condoms are a form of barrier contraception. This means that they protect against pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

**Contraceptive injection**

Contraceptive injections contain a progestogene hormone, which is similar to that which occurs naturally in women. Injections last between 8 and 13 weeks, depending on the type you use and are estimated to be over 99% effective when taken on time.

**Female condoms**

Female condoms are a form of barrier contraception. This means that they protect against both pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). When used correctly and consistently, condoms are a reliable method of preventing pregnancy - thought to be around 95% effective.

**Intrauterine device (IUD/non-hormonal coil)**

The IUD is a small plastic and copper device that is inserted into your womb by a doctor or nurse. It is a very effective method of contraception and newer types of IUD are over 99% effective.