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**DEPARTMENT: HUMAN ANATOMY**

**CONTRACEPTION**

Contraception is a process/procedure used to prevent pregnancy.

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

**Types and examples of Contraceptive**

* abstinence
* natural family planning
* caps

**Hormonal method**

* Combined oral contraceptive pill
* Progesterone only contraceptive pill
* contraceptive injection

**Barrier methods**

* condoms (female)
* condoms (male)

**Long acting contraception method**

* contraceptive implant
* contraceptive patch
* diaphragms
* intrauterine device (IUD)
* intrauterine system (IUS)
* vaginal ring

**Permanent methods**

* female sterilisation
* male sterilisation (vasectomy)

**Traditional methods**

* Calendar method or rhythm method
* Withdrawal (coitus interruptus)

Common side effects of birth control pills

* Nausea
* Vomiting
* Weight gain
* Skin discoloration
* Acne
* Bleeding between periods or spotting
* Mood swings
* Change in menstrual flow
* Breast swelling or tenderness
* Heart attacks, blood clots, cancer and strokes are potential and serious complications of oral contraceptives.

**The Condom**

The condom is the only form of contraception that protects against most STIs as well as preventing pregnancy. This method of contraception can be used on demand, is hormone free and can easily be carried with you. And it comes in male and female varieties.

The internal condom is a pouch that is used during intercourse to prevent pregnancy. It also reduces the risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). It has flexible rings at each end – one end is closed and the other is open. The internal condom is inserted deep into the vagina just before vaginal intercourse. The ring at the closed end holds the pouch in the vagina and the ring at the open end stays outside the vaginal opening during intercourse.

Male condoms are rolled onto an erect penis and act as a physical barrier, preventing sexual fluids from passing between people during sex. The female condom is placed into the vagina right before sex. Based on typical use, the female condom is not quite as effective as the male latex condom and it may take a little practice to get used to.

It’s the best protection against STIs; can be used on demand; hormone free. It can tear or come off during sex if not used properly; some people are allergic to latex condoms.

**Intrauterine Device (IUD)**

This small, T-shaped device is made from made of material containing progesterone hormone or plastic and copper and is fitted inside a woman’s uterus by a trained healthcare provider. It's a long acting and reversible method of contraception, which can stay in place for three to 10 years, depending on the type.

Some IUDs contain hormones that are gradually released to prevent pregnancy. The IUD can also be an effective emergency contraception if fitted by a healthcare professional within five days (120 hours) of having unprotected sex.

IUDs containing coppers are 99% effective and the ones containing hormones are 99.8% effective, so you’re about as protected as you possibly can be by a contraceptive method. Irregular bleeding and spotting occur in the first six months of use; requires a trained healthcare provider for insertion and removal; does not protect against STIs.

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**The Contraceptive Implant**

In this method, a small, flexible rod is placed under the skin in a woman’s upper arm, releasing a form of the hormone progesterone. The hormone stops the ovary releasing the egg and thickens the cervical mucus making it difficult for sperm to enter the womb. The implant requires a small procedure using local anaesthetic to fit and remove the rod and needs to be replaced after three years.

Highly effective; doesn’t interrupt sex; is a long-lasting, reversible contraceptive option. This requires a trained healthcare provider for insertion and removal; sometimes there can be irregular bleeding initially; does not protect against STIs.

**The Contraceptive Injection**

The injection contains a synthetic version of the hormone progestogen. It is given into a woman’s buttock or the upper arm, and over the next 12 weeks the hormone is slowly released into your bloodstream.

The injection lasts for up to three months; is very effective; permits sexual spontaneity and doesn’t interrupt sex. The injection may cause disrupted periods or irregular bleeding; it requires keeping track of the number of months used; it does not protect against STIs.

**Emergency Contraception Pill (The ‘Morning After’ Pill)**

The Emergency Contraception Pill can be used to prevent pregnancy after sex if contraception wasn’t used, a condom has broken during sex, or a woman has been sexually assaulted.

While it is sometimes calling the ‘Morning After’ pill, it can actually be effective for up to five days after having unprotected sex. The sooner it is taken, the more effective it is; when taken in the first three days after sex, it prevents about 85% of expected pregnancies.

This pill contains special doses of female hormones. Any woman can take the emergency contraception pill, even those who cannot take other oral contraceptive pills. It can be bought over the counter at a pharmacy or chemist without a prescription.

The common side effects of the emergency contraceptive include nausea, vomiting and the next period may be early or delayed. Emergency contraception does not protect against STIs.

**Contraceptive Ring**

This method consists of a flexible plastic ring constantly releasing hormones that is placed in the vagina by the woman. It stays in place for three weeks, and then you remove it, take a week off then pop another one in. The ring releases the hormones oestrogen and progestogen. These are the same hormones used in the combined oral contraceptive pill, but at a lower dose.

You can insert and remove a vaginal ring yourself; this contraceptive method has few side effects, allows control of your periods and allows your fertility to return quickly when the ring is removed.