














Your Birth Control Choices

Method	How well does it work?	How to Use	Pros	Cons
Copper IUD (ParaGard™) 	99%	Must be placed in uterus by a health care provider. Must be removed by a health care provider.	May be left in place for up to 12 years. Can be used while breastfeeding. Ability to become pregnant returns quickly when IUD is removed.	May cause more cramps and heavy periods. IUDs can cause spotting between periods. Rarely, uterus is injured during placement. Does not protect against HIV or other STIs.
Progestin IUD (Mirena™) 	99%	Must be placed in uterus by a health care provider. Must be removed by a health care provider.	May be left in place up to 7 years. May improve period cramps and bleeding. Can be used while breastfeeding. Ability to become pregnant returns quickly when IUD is removed.	May cause lighter periods, spotting, or no period at all. Rarely, uterus is injured during placement. Does not protect against HIV or other STIs.
The Implant (Implanon™) 	> 99%	A health care provider places it under the skin of the upper arm. Must be removed by a health care provider.	Long lasting (up to 3 years). No medicine to take daily. Can be used while breastfeeding. Ability to become pregnant returns quickly after it is removed.	May cause irregular bleeding (spotting, no periods or heavy periods). After 1 year, many women have no period at all. Does not protect against HIV or other STIs.
The Shot (Depo-Provera™) 	97-99%	Get shot every 3 months.	Each shot works for 12 weeks, Private, Helps prevent cancer of the lining of the uterus (womb). No pill to take daily. Can be used while breastfeeding.	May cause spotting, no period, weight gain, depression, hair or skin changes, change in sex drive. May cause delay in getting pregnant after you stop the shots. Side effects may last up to 6 months after you stop the shots. Does not protect against HIV or other STIs.
The Pill 	92-99%	Must take the pill daily.	Can make periods more regular and less painful. Can improve PMS symptoms, Can improve acne. Lowers risk of ovarian cancer. Ability to become pregnant returns quickly after stopping the pills.	May cause nausea, weight gain, headaches, change in sex drive – but these can be relieved by changing to a new brand. May cause spotting the first 1-2 months. Does not protect against HIV or other STIs.
Progestin-Only Pills 	92-99%	Must take the pill at the same time each day.	Can be used while breastfeeding. Ability to become pregnant returns quickly after stopping the pills.	Often cause spotting, which may last for many months. May cause depression, hair or skin changes, change in sex drive. Does not protect against HIV or other STIs.
The Patch (Ortho Evra™) 	92-99%	Apply a new patch once a week for three weeks. No patch in week 4.	Can make periods more regular and less painful. No pill to take daily. Ability to become pregnant returns quickly after stopping patch.	Can irritate skin under the patch. May cause spotting the first 1-2 months. Does not protect against HIV or other STIs.
The Ring (Nuvaring™) 	92-99%	Insert a small ring into the vagina. Change ring each month.	Does not require a “fitting” by a health care provider, Private, Does not require spermicide. Can make periods more regular and less painful. No pill to take daily. Ability to become pregnant returns quickly after stopping the ring.	Can increase vaginal discharge. May cause spotting the first 1-2 months of use. Does not protect against HIV or other STIs.
Male Condom 	85-98%	Use a new condom each time you have sex. Use a polyurethane condom if allergic to latex.	Can buy at many stores. Can put on as part of sex play/foreplay. Can help prevent early ejaculation. Protects against HIV and many other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Can be used while breastfeeding.	Can decrease sensation. Can cause loss of erection. Can break or slip off.
Female Condom 	79-95%	Use a new condom each time you have sex. Use extra lubrication as needed.	Can buy at many stores. Can put in as part of sex play/foreplay. Good for people with latex allergy. Protects against HIV and other STIs. Can be used while breastfeeding.	May be noisy. May be hard to insert. May slip out of place during sex.
Spermicide (Cream, gel, sponge, foam, inserts, film) 	71-85%	Insert more spermicide each time you have sex.	Can buy at many stores. Can be put in as part of sex play/foreplay. Comes in many forms: cream, gel, sponge, foam, inserts, film. Can be used while breastfeeding.	May raise the risk of getting HIV. May irritate vagina, penis. Cream, gel, and foam can be messy.
Diaphragm 	84-94%	Must be used each time you have sex. Must be used with spermicide. A health care provider will fit you and show you how to use it.	Can last several years. Costs very little to use. May protect against some infections (NOT HIV). Can be used while breastfeeding.	Using spermicide nonoxonyl-9 may raise the risk of getting HIV. Should not be used with vaginal bleeding or infection. Raises risk of bladder infection.
Emergency Contraception (Plan B® One-Step, Next Choice™ and others) 	58-94%	Works best the sooner you take it after unprotected sex. Take pill(s) as soon as you can after unprotected sex. You can take EC up to 5 days after unprotected sex. If pack contains 2 pills, take both together.	Can be used while breastfeeding. Available at pharmacies, health centers or health care providers. Call ahead to see if they have it. Women 17 years or older can get EC without a prescription.	May cause stomach upset or nausea. The next period may come early or late. May cause spotting. Does not protect against HIV or other STIs. Girls under age 17 need a prescription. May cost a lot.