

Method	How it Works	Effectiveness	Benefits	Drawbacks
<b>Abstinence</b>	Not having oral, anal or vaginal sex and not engaging in activity that puts you or your partner in contact with semen, vaginal fluids, and blood.	Abstinence is 100% effective in preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.	It has no medical or hormonal side effects, and is FREE. Abstinence postpones physical and emotional risks until one is ready to handle them.	Abstinence only works if you don't have sex of any kind. If you decide to have sex, choose another method from this chart to protect yourself.
<b>Male Condom</b>	A latex or polyurethane sheath covers the penis to collect and prevent sperm from entering the vagina.	With perfect use, they are 98% effective. With typical use, condoms are 85% effective.	Male condoms provide good protection against most STDs & HIV. They are cheap and easy to get.	It can break and/or leak if not withdrawn correctly. Condoms must be used with water-based lubricants ONLY!
<b>Female Condom</b>	A thin polyurethane sheath shaped like a sock with a flexible ring at each end. The ring at the closed end is placed inside the vagina, while the ring at the open end remains outside the vagina. The pouch collects and prevents semen from entering the vagina.	With perfect use, female condoms are 95% effective. With typical use, the female condom is 79% effective.	Protects against STDs, including HIV, and you can get it without a prescription. You can insert it up to eight hours before having sex. This is a great alternative for those who are allergic to latex.	The outside ring can slide inside the vagina during intercourse. It must be removed immediately after intercourse, before you stand up, to prevent semen leakage. DO NOT USE AT THE SAME TIME AS A MALE CONDOM!!!
<b>Birth Control Pills</b>	A woman takes daily a pill that contains a combination of artificial estrogen and progestin or progestin only. It works by increasing cervical mucus to block sperm and creating a thin uterine environment.	With perfect use, they are 99%+ effective. With typical use, birth control pills are 92% effective.	If taken correctly, the pill provides protection from pregnancy. It can also make a woman's period more regular, reduce cramps, and shorten or lighten her period.	No protection against STDS & HIV. Possible side effects include nausea, headaches, mood swings. Use a back up method if you are late starting a new pack of pills or miss two or more pills.
<b>The Patch (Ortho-Evra)</b>	The woman wears one patch for seven days, three weeks in a row and then goes patch-free for one week. The patch releases estrogen and progestin and works by increasing cervical mucus to block sperm	The patch is the first weekly form of reversible contraception that's 99% effective when used correctly. The patch helps prevent pregnancy the same way that birth control pills do: by preventing ovulation.	Weekly dosing and the ability to visually verify the patch is in place makes it more likely to be used correctly. One may also experience more regular, lighter, or shorter periods. The patch can be applied to the tricep, buttocks, upper torso, or abdomen.	No protection against STDs & HIV. Requires back-up method for the first 7 days unless started on first day of menstruation. May cause local skin rash, spotting, nausea, headaches, mood swings. May be difficult to hide, & estrogen levels are very high.
<b>The Ring (Nuva Ring)</b>	A flexible, soft ring that releases synthetic estrogen and progestin to prevent pregnancy. The ring is inserted into the vagina for 21 days. It is then removed and kept out for 7 days.	The vaginal ring has been proven to be 99% effective when used as directed. The ring offers month-long protection against pregnancy.	The ring is effective immediately and easy to confirm it is in place. Studies confirm low incidence of side effects. It's flexible, soft, comfortable, convenient, easy to use, discreet, and allows one to be spontaneous.	No protection against STDs & HIV. The ring should be refrigerated before use to prolong its life. Side effects may include nausea, headaches, mood swings, vaginal discomfort.
<b>The Shot (Depo-Provera)</b>	A woman gets an intramuscular shot of the artificial hormone progestin every three months which keeps her from getting pregnant.	With perfect use, the shot is 99+% effective. With typical use, the shot is 97% effective in preventing against pregnancy.	Once you get the shot, you don't have to think about birth control for three months. This method is not recommended unless all other options are exhausted.	No protection against STDs & HIV. Can cause weight gain, irregular periods, and depression. May experience headaches, bloating, acne, & breast tenderness.
<b>IUD (Intra-uterine Device)</b>	A small device that contains copper or a synthetic progestin hormone that is inserted into a woman's uterus.	A copper IUD is 99% effective. A progestin IUD is 98% effective.	It provides effective pregnancy protection and lasts a long time—a copper IUD can stay in place for up to 10 years and a progestin IUD lasts 1 year.	No protection from STDs & HIV. Some side effects are spotting between periods, heavier periods, and increased cramping. 2-10% of users reported it falling out
<b>Emergency Contraception (Morning after pill)</b>	Inhibits or delays ovulation, preventing fertilization of an egg. You can take it up to 72 hours after unprotected intercourse, but the sooner you take it, the more effective it is.	Emergency contraception is 75 to 89% effective depending on how soon you use it.	The faster you act, the greater your chances are of avoiding unintended pregnancy. It does not terminate an established pregnancy, it prevents pregnancy from occurring.	Used for emergencies only! Can cause nausea or vomiting for a day or more. It is not a long-term form of birth control and will not protect you against STDs or HIV.