

Choices



for effective contraception



The choices

Efficacy & advantages

Main drawbacks



Combined pills

Tablet containing oestrogen and progestogen.

- 99% or more when used correctly
- Useful for young healthy women who can reliably take pills
- Works mainly by preventing egg release

- Not suitable for women with conditions such as high blood pressure
- Unsuitable for women over 35 who smoke



Progestogen only pills

Tablet containing only progestogen. Two types available.

- 96-99% when used correctly
- Suitable for women who do not want to or cannot take oestrogen. *Two types available:*

Type 1.

- Works mainly by preventing egg release
- In case of missed pill, can be taken up to 12 hours late

Type 2.

- Works mainly by preventing sperm entering the womb
- In case of missed pill, must be taken within 3 hours

- Many women have changes in menstrual pattern

- Does not consistently prevent egg release
- Many women have changes in menstrual pattern



Implants

Small flexible rod which is placed just under the skin. Contains progestogen only.

- Over 99% effective
- Effective and rapidly reversible method of contraception
- Lasts up to 3 years
- Useful for women who forget to take their pills

- Many women have changes in menstrual patterns
- Insertion and removal must be performed by trained professionals



Progestogen injections

Injection containing progestogen. Injected into a muscle every 8 or 12 weeks.

- Over 99% effective
- Useful for women who forget to take their pills

- Cannot be immediately reversed in event of side effects
- Many women have changes in menstrual patterns
- Can take some time for fertility to return to normal



IUD (the coil)

Intrauterine device that is fitted into the womb.

- 98-99% effective
- Women who want longer term contraception or who do not want to take hormones

- Periods may become heavier, longer or more painful
- Risk of pelvic infection if you have more than one partner
- Insertion and removal must be performed by trained professionals



IUS

Intrauterine device fitted into the womb. Contains progestogen only.

- Over 99% effective
- Lasts up to 5 years
- Effective and rapidly reversible method of contraception

- Many women have changes in menstrual patterns
- Risk of pelvic infection if you have more than one partner
- Insertion and removal must be performed by trained professionals



Patch

Patch containing oestrogen and progestogen.

- 99% or more when used correctly
- Applied once a week for 3 weeks

- May be seen on the skin
- Not suitable for women with conditions such as high blood pressure
- Unsuitable for women over 35 who smoke



Natural methods

Recognising the fertile and infertile times of your cycle to plan when you should avoid sex.

- 94-99% with perfect use when intercourse is restricted to the time after ovulation
- Avoids devices or hormones. Can be used at all stages of reproductive life

- Can take up to 6 months to learn effectively
- Stress or illness can make the method unreliable
- Need to avoid intercourse at certain times of the month and be highly motivated



Condoms

Barrier method that the man or woman can use.

- When used correctly, around 98% for male condoms and 95% for female condoms
- Avoids hormones
- Offers protection against sexually transmitted infections

- Putting them on involves interruption
- The male condom can split or rupture
- The female condom can be pushed aside



Diaphragms/caps

Barrier methods that you fit inside the vagina to cover the cervix.

- Effective in 92-96% of women when used correctly
- Useful for those who wish to avoid hormones

- Involves forward planning or interruption of intercourse
- Can be messy as you need to use spermicide as well



Sterilisation

- Over 99% effective
- Permanent method of contraception that involves no hormones

- Cannot be easily reversed
- Involves an operation
- Male sterilisation is not effective immediately