

# BIRTH CONTROL: WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU?

**Look** inside to learn about your options.

**BEDSIDER**  
*Bedsider.org*

  
Beyond  
the Pill  
[beyondthepill.ucsf.edu](http://beyondthepill.ucsf.edu)

PRIVACY

START + STOP

SIDE EFFECTS

BLEEDING

EFFECTIVENESS

FERTILITY

EC

# WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO ME ABOUT MY BIRTH CONTROL?

You might already know what's important right now, or not, and what's important to you may change over time. These common questions about birth control can help you find a method that works for you.



Go to [Bedsider.org](https://www.bedsider.org) for details on all the methods, how to get them, and how to use them.

## PRIVACY

### CAN ANYONE TELL IF I'M USING BIRTH CONTROL?

- Some birth control methods are easier to keep private than others.
- Think about who you want to keep your birth control private from and how they might discover it.

## START + STOP

### CAN I START & STOP BIRTH CONTROL ON MY OWN?

- Some birth control methods require a health care provider to start or stop, others don't.
- Think about how that would work for you.

## SIDE EFFECTS

### WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF BIRTH CONTROL?

- Many common side effects are from birth control hormones.
- Think about what side effects are okay for you.

## BLEEDING

### HOW WILL BIRTH CONTROL CHANGE MY PERIOD?

- Some birth control methods can change how much bleeding you have or how often. These changes are safe.
- Think about what bleeding changes would be okay for you.

## EFFECTIVENESS

### HOW WELL DOES BIRTH CONTROL WORK?

- Some birth control methods are better than others at preventing pregnancy.
- Think about how important it is to you to prevent pregnancy right now.

## FERTILITY

### HOW SOON CAN I GET PREGNANT AFTER STOPPING BIRTH CONTROL?

- After stopping birth control, your chance of getting pregnant returns to whatever is normal for you, but it's not immediate with all methods.
- Think about if you want to be pregnant and when that might be.

## EC

### WHAT IS EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION (EC)?

- Emergency contraception (EC) pills and some IUDs can prevent pregnancy when used up to 5 days after sex.
- Think about if you need it now or in the future.

# CAN ANYONE TELL IF I'M USING BIRTH CONTROL?

Some methods are easier to keep private than others.

No one can see it



Shot

Someone could feel the implant in your arm.



Implant

Your partner might feel the IUD strings.



IUDs

These methods can be very private. But they may change your periods, so someone could notice.

Whether or not you choose to use birth control is your decision.

It's OK to use privately.

Someone could find it



Pill



Ring

Think about where on your body to put it.



Patch

Someone could find the method or its packaging.

Think about how someone might discover your method.

Use with a partner

Info on an app may not stay private.



Fertility Awareness

Someone could find the condom or its packaging.



Internal Condom



Condom



Pulling Out

These methods may be hard to hide from a sexual partner and are easier to use with your partner's help.

If you don't feel safe in your relationship and want support, contact:

Love is Respect  
Call 1-866-331-9474,  
Text LOVEIS to 22522,  
or visit  
[loveisrespect.org](http://loveisrespect.org)

# CAN I START & STOP BIRTH CONTROL ON MY OWN?

Some methods require a health care provider, others don't.

With these methods a sexual partner's cooperation is important.

Don't need a health care provider



Over-the-Counter Pill



Condom



Internal Condom



Pulling Out



Fertility Awareness

You can start & stop these methods on your own.

Go to [Bedsider.org](https://www.bedsider.org) to find out where to get birth control where you live. You may be able to get your method for free.

Need a health care provider to START



Pill



Patch



Ring

The hormones in the shot last at least 3 months.



Shot

You need a prescription to start using these methods, but you can stop on your own.

You may be able to get your method by ordering online or directly from a pharmacy and start it at home yourself.

Need a health care provider to START & STOP



Implant



IUDs



Visit a health care provider to get these methods and to have them removed.

If you stop a method and don't want to get pregnant, use another form of birth control.

# WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF BIRTH CONTROL?

Most common side effects are from birth control hormones.

## No Hormones



Condom



Internal Condom



Fertility Awareness



Pulling Out

May cause heavier bleeding & cramping.



Copper IUD

Some people experience side effects from birth control, others don't.

No hormones means these methods won't cause hormone-related side effects.

## Progestin Hormones



Hormonal IUD



Mini-Pill



Implant

May cause weight gain for some.



Shot

Talk to a health care provider if you have side effects you don't like. They may be able to help.

Common side effects include lighter, irregular periods, bloating, mood changes, and reduced sex drive.\*

## Progestin & Estrogen Hormones



Ring

There are many types of pills & each can have different side effects.



Pill



Patch

Not every method is a good match for everyone. Ask a health care provider about the possible risks and benefits for you.

Common side effects include lighter, more regular periods, breast tenderness, nausea, vomiting, and headaches.\*

\*These are not all the possible side effects for everyone, go to [Bedsider.org](https://www.bedsider.org) or talk with a health care provider to learn more.

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# HOW WILL BIRTH CONTROL CHANGE MY PERIOD?

Some methods change how much bleeding you have or how often.

No Change



Condom



Internal Condom



Fertility Awareness



Pulling Out

These methods won't change your period.

These methods won't change your period because they don't have hormones.

Lighter & Irregular



Mini-Pill



Hormonal IUD



Implant



Shot

Your period may become much lighter, come more or less often (even every day), or stop altogether.

Not having a period with these methods is common and doesn't mean something is wrong.

Lighter & Regular



Pill



Patch



Ring

Your period may become lighter, shorter, and more regular.

Don't want to have your period? Ask your health care provider how to use these methods to skip it.

Heavier



Copper IUD

Your period will come when it normally does and may be heavier.

Talk to a health care provider if you have period changes you don't like—they may be able to help.

Once you stop using a method, your period will return to whatever is normal for you.

# HOW WELL DOES BIRTH CONTROL WORK?

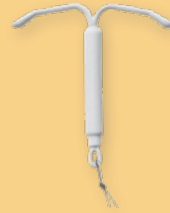
What's your chance of getting pregnant in a year?



Really, really well



Implant



Hormonal IUD



Copper IUD



Sterilization

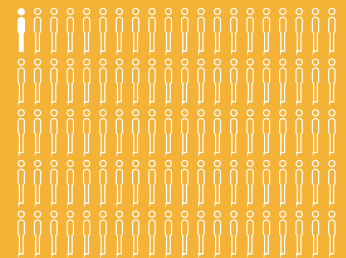
Works as birth control...

Up to 5 years

Up to 8 years

Up to 12 years

Forever



Less than 1 in 100



Really well



Pill



Patch



Ring



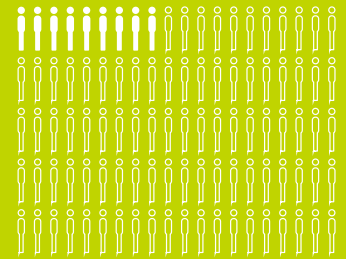
Shot

For it to work best, use it... Every day

Every week

Every month

Every 3 months



6-9 in 100, depending on method



Pretty well



Pulling Out



Fertility Awareness



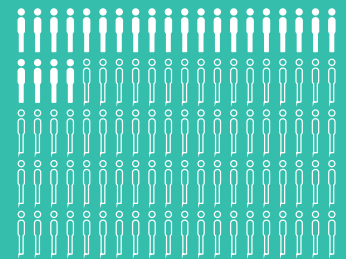
Internal Condom



Condom

Can be used alone or with another method for STI protection.

For each of these methods to work, you or your partner have to use it every time you have sex.



12-24 in 100, depending on method

More than 85 in 100 without birth control.

# HOW SOON CAN I GET PREGNANT AFTER STOPPING BIRTH CONTROL?

Right  
away



Condom



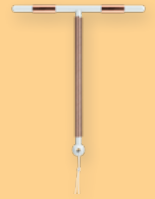
Internal Condom



Fertility Awareness



Pulling Out



Copper IUD

You could get pregnant anytime you have sex and don't use one of these methods (or another method).

Pretty  
quickly



Pill



Patch



Ring



Implant



Hormonal IUD

You could get pregnant within a day to a few weeks after you stop using these methods.

Give it  
some time



Shot

The shot may reduce your chances of getting pregnant for several months to a year.

You could get pregnant as soon as 3 months after getting the shot.




None of these birth control methods will affect your chances of getting pregnant in the future.

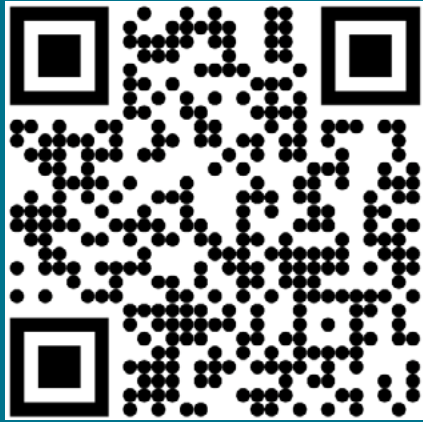
Your ability to get pregnant (a.k.a. fertility) will return to whatever is normal for you after stopping birth control.

How long it takes to get pregnant is different for everyone.

# WHAT IS EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION (EC)?

EC is birth control to use after sex to prevent pregnancy.

Types of EC	When can I use EC?	How do I get EC?	What about next time?
 <p>Over-the-counter EC pills</p>	<p><b>ASAP</b> works best within 3 days but may work up to 5 days</p> <p>May be less effective over 165 pounds.</p>	<p>No prescription needed</p> <p>Find it at a pharmacy, clinic, or online.</p>	<p>Take it every time you need EC</p> <p>You can get extra EC for next time.</p>
 <p>Prescription EC pills</p>	<p><b>ASAP</b> but can work up to 5 days</p> <p>Most effective EC pill. May be less effective over 195 pounds.</p>	<p>Need a prescription</p> <p>Talk to a health care provider online or in person.</p>	<p>Take it every time you need EC</p> <p>Ask about a refill so you can have it for next time.</p>
 <p>IUDs</p>	<p><b>Anytime</b> up to 5 days</p> <p>Nearly 100% effective for any weight.</p>	<p>Visit a health care provider to have an IUD placed</p> <p>Say it's for EC so you are scheduled quickly.</p>	<p>Keeps working as birth control</p> <p>You can have it removed at any time.</p>



Explore all your  
birth control  
options.

[Bedsider.org](https://www.bedsider.org)



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