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Birth Control at a Glance

A guide to some of the birth control methods used by women today

Birth Control Method	Range of Effectiveness	How Do I Take It?	Prescription Required	Contains Hormones
Combined Oral Contraceptive Pill 	92%–99% ^{1*}	Take one pill at the same time every day as directed ²	Yes ²	Yes ²
Progestin-only Pill 	92%–99% ^{1*}	Take one pill at the same time every day as directed ³	Yes ³	Yes ³
Vaginal Ring 	92%–99% ^{1*}	Inserted in the vagina and kept in place for 3 weeks, then removed for 1 week ⁴	Yes ⁷	Yes ⁷
Implant 	Greater than 99% ^{1*}	Inserted in healthcare provider's office; effective for up to 3 years ⁴	Inserted and removed in healthcare provider's office ⁴	Yes ⁴
Condom 	79%–95% for female condom (when used without spermicide) ^{1*} 85%–98% for male condom (when used without spermicide) ^{1*}	Use a new condom for every episode of sexual intercourse ⁴	No ⁸	No
Diaphragm 	84%–94% (when used with spermicide) ^{1*}	Fitted by healthcare provider. Must be inserted before every episode of sexual intercourse and left in place for at least 8 hours after intercourse but not more than 24 hours after insertion ⁴	Yes ⁸	No
Cervical Cap 	68%–91% (when used with spermicide) ⁴ May be less effective in women who have had children ⁴	Fitted by healthcare provider. Must be inserted before every episode of sexual intercourse and left in place for at least 6 hours after intercourse but not more than 48 hours after insertion ⁸	Yes ⁸	No
Sponge 	68%–91% ^{1*} May be less effective in women who have had children ¹	Insertion provides 24 hours of protection against pregnancy and must be left in place for at least 6 hours after sexual intercourse but no more than 30 hours after insertion ⁹	No ⁸	No
Spermicide 	71%–82% ^{1*}	Must be used right before every episode of sexual intercourse ⁴	No ⁸	No
Patch 	92%–99% ^{1*}	One patch is worn each week for 3 weeks, followed by no patch for 1 week ⁴	Yes ¹⁰	Yes ¹⁰
Injection 	97%–99% ^{1*}	Administered once every 3 months by a healthcare provider ¹¹	Yes ¹¹	Yes ¹¹
Female Sterilization 	Greater than 99% ^{1*}	Single surgery provides effective pregnancy prevention ⁴	Surgical procedure ⁴	No

*Note: The range of effectiveness for birth control methods depends on consistently and correctly following the directions given to you by your healthcare provider.¹

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