

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT CONTRACEPTION

In the Clinic
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How much of a risk is unplanned pregnancy?

- Almost half of all pregnancies in the United States are unplanned.
- Unplanned pregnancy increases the risk for problems for both the mother and the baby.
- Women of all ages may have unplanned pregnancies.
- Some groups are at a higher risk, including teens and people living in poverty.
- Four out of five pregnancies among teenage women are unplanned.

How can unplanned pregnancy be prevented?

- Most women of reproductive age in the United States use contraception (birth control).
- Several safe and effective methods are available.
- Contraceptives are divided into hormonal and nonhormonal methods.
- Most hormonal contraceptives work by suppressing ovulation.
- Intrauterine devices (IUDs) work by preventing sperm from fertilizing an egg.
- Nonhormonal methods work by preventing sperm from entering the cervix.

What types of birth control are available?

- Combined or progesterone-only hormonal oral contraceptive pills.
- IUDs (levonorgestrel-releasing and copper).
- Hormonal implant, contraceptive patch, or vaginal ring.
- Barrier methods, including the male and female condom, diaphragm, and sponge.
- Permanent sterilization for men (vasectomy) and women (tubal ligation [i.e., "tube-tying"]).



What type is right for you?

- Many factors are considered when choosing birth control, including whether you wish to become pregnant sometime in the future.
- Long-acting methods, such as the IUD, are generally more reliable than short-acting methods like "the pill" (which must be taken daily).
- Medical conditions and other considerations may influence choice.
- Women who are overweight or smoke may face an increased risk for blood clot or stroke from hormonal contraceptives.
- If you have sex without birth control, emergency contraception is available to prevent pregnancy.
- A condom should be used to prevent sexually transmitted infections, even if other contraception is used.

For More Information

www.arhp.org/Publications-and-Resources/Patient-Resources/Interactive-Tools/Choosing-a-Birth-Control-Method

An interactive tool for choosing a birth control method, from the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals.

www.arhp.org/Publications-and-Resources/Patient-Resources/Interactive-Tools/hormonal-contraception

An interactive tool on how birth control pills work to prevent pregnancy from the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals.

www.arhp.org/Publications-and-Resources/Patient-Resources/Fact-Sheets/EC

www.arhp.org/Publications-and-Resources/Patient-Resources/Fact-Sheets/EC-SP

Facts about emergency contraception pills in English and Spanish.

www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/birthcontrol.html

Information resources on contraception, from the National Institutes of Health MedlinePlus.

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