Birth Control Methods

How Well They Work and How Long They Last

The Ohio State University
Wexner Medical Center

These are common forms of birth control. Not every form available is listed. Talk to your healthcare provider to find the best option for you.

Method	How well it works Out of 100 people, how many might get pregnant in 1 year	How long it lasts	What else you should know
 **Sterilization** - Tubal ligation - Vasectomy	**Over 99% effective** Fewer than 1 in 100	**Permanent**	For people who are sure they do not want to have children in the future.
 **Hormonal IUD** (Mirena, Liletta, and others)	**Over 99% effective** Fewer than 1 in 100	**3 to 8 years** (depending on brand)	Low maintenance, set it and forget it. May make periods lighter.
 **Copper IUD**	**Over 99% effective** Fewer than 1 in 100	**Up to 10 years**	Hormone-free. May cause heavier periods or cramping.
 **Implant** (Nexplanon)	**Over 99% effective** Fewer than 1 in 100	**Up to 5 years**	Small rod placed in arm. Very effective and low maintenance.
 **Shot** (Depo-Provera)	**96% effective** 4 in 100	**Every 3 months**	You need a shot every 3 months. May affect periods.
 **Pill**	**93% effective** 7 in 100	**Every day**	Take at the same time every day for highest effectiveness.
 **Patch**	**93% effective** 7 in 100	**Weekly**	Apply to skin, change weekly for 3 weeks, then leave off for 1 week.
 **Ring**	**93% effective** 7 in 100	**Monthly**	Placed in vagina, leave in for 3 weeks, remove for 1 week.

Method		How well it works Out of 100 people, how many might get pregnant in 1 year	How long it lasts	What else you should know
	**Condom** (male)	**87% effective** 13 in 100	**Every time** you have sex	Use a new condom every time. Protects against STIs.
	**Withdrawal** (pull-out method)	**80% effective** 20 in 100	**Every time** you have sex	Refers to pulling out before ejaculation. Pre-ejaculate may contain sperm.
	**Internal Condom** (female)	**79% effective** 21 in 100	**Every time** you have sex	Use a new condom every time. Protects against STIs.
	**Natural Family Planning**	**76% effective** 24 in 100	**Every day** tracking and planning	Involves tracking your cycle to avoid sex on fertile days.
	**Emergency Contraception** (Plan B and others)	**Not for daily use.** Works best the sooner you take it	**As soon as possible** within 3 to 5 days after unprotected sex	 Not a regular form of birth control. For emergencies only.

Source: American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG). Effectiveness of Birth Control Methods. Accessed October 5, 2026.

Things to consider



Your health and medical history.



Your lifestyle and how easy it is to use.



Your side effects and preferences.



Your insurance coverage and cost.

Talk with your healthcare provider to find a method that fits your health needs, lifestyle, and future pregnancy plans. They can explain the benefits, risks, and effectiveness of each method.

This resource is for informational purposes only. Talk to your healthcare provider if you have any questions about your care. For more education, contact the Library for Health Information at 614-293-3707 or health-info@osu.edu.

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