

# 8 Myths & Facts About Birth Control

**1 MYTH** You can't get pregnant the first time you have sex.

**FACT** An average ejaculation contains 200–500 million sperm. If just one sperm meets an egg you can get pregnant. Without birth control, this can happen every time you have sex, including the first time.

**2 MYTH** Birth control pills work even if you don't always take them as directed.

**FACT** If a girl doesn't take her pills just as her doctor says to, she can definitely get pregnant. Always use a back-up method such as condoms if you miss taking a pill.

**3 MYTH** Depo-provera stays in your body all the time, so if you miss your shot by a day, week or month, you're still protected.

**FACT** Depo provera only stays in the body for 90 days. If a girl doesn't get her shot on time, her ovaries will release an egg and she can get pregnant.

**4 MYTH** Condoms aren't worth using because they break, guys hate them and they don't protect you from everything.

**FACT** Condoms can be sexy, safe and fun once you know how to use them. Using condoms is easy and practicing can make you a better lover, whether you're a guy or a girl. **If you have sex, no other method protects you from both pregnancy and STD.**

**5 MYTH** Everyone will think I'm having a lot of sex if I go to a birth control clinic.

**FACT** Using birth control doesn't mean you're having a lot of sex. It means you're responsible! Clinics must keep your visit private. So no one even has to know. You can also get birth control at a regular doctor's office.

**6 MYTH** You won't get pregnant if you have sex standing up.

**FACT** Sperm are great swimmers! They can swim up, down and sideways to reach the egg. A pregnancy can happen no matter what position you're in if you have unprotected sex.

**7 MYTH** A girl can't get pregnant if she's having her period.

**FACT** A girl can get pregnant if she has sex when she's menstruating. Sperm can live for up to 5 days inside a woman's body and fertilize an egg released after she has sex. There's never a "safe" time to have unprotected sex.

**8 MYTH** If the guy pulls out before he comes, it works as well as using a condom.

**FACT** This is called withdrawal and it won't prevent pregnancy because: (1) semen with sperm in it may leak out of a man's penis before he comes, and (2) guys can't always tell when they're going to come.

## Emergency Birth Control

**After sex, you still have up to 5 days to prevent pregnancy.**

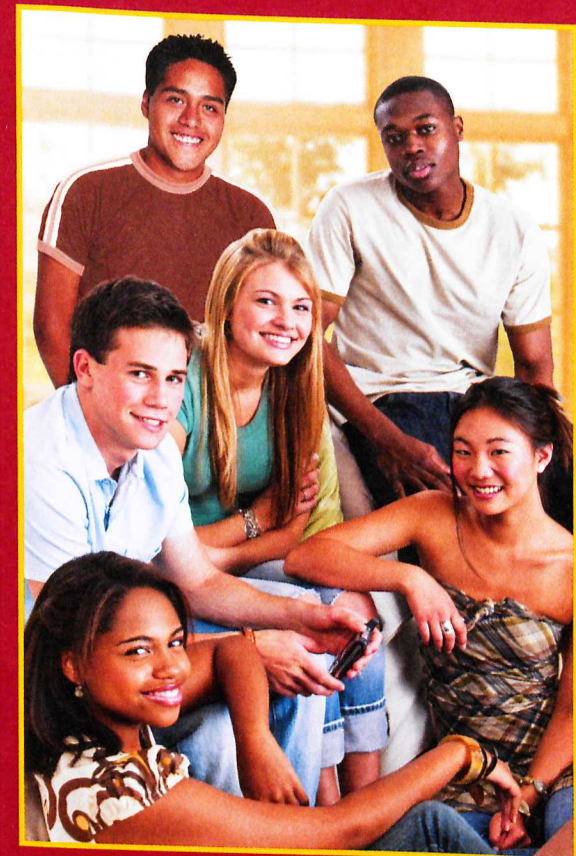
Emergency birth control in the form of pills or an IUD is an option if your birth control method was damaged, wasn't used or wasn't used correctly.

If you are 17 or older, you can get some kinds of emergency birth control pills from a pharmacist without a prescription. If you are younger than 17, a health care provider can prescribe the correct dose of pills and tell you how to use them.

Find out more about emergency birth control from your health care provider, local family planning clinic or pharmacist.

Or see [www.not-2-late.com](http://www.not-2-late.com) for information and referral to a provider in your area.

# Birth Control Facts for Teens



Professional models were used in all photos.

This brochure is not intended as a substitute for your health professional's opinion or care.

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Condoms • Depo-Provera • Diaphragm • IUD  
Foam • Suppositories • Film • Implanon  
Pill • Patch • Vaginal Ring • Abstinence

# Choose a Method You Like

## How well does this method work?

Would a pregnancy be a problem for me right now?

Then you'll be more likely to use it correctly every time. That's the best way to prevent a pregnancy.

From the chart inside, choose 2 or 3 methods you think might work for you. Answer these questions about each method.

Will this method help protect me from HIV and other sexually transmitted disease (STD)?

## How much will this method cost?

Can I afford it?

## Is this method easy to get and use?

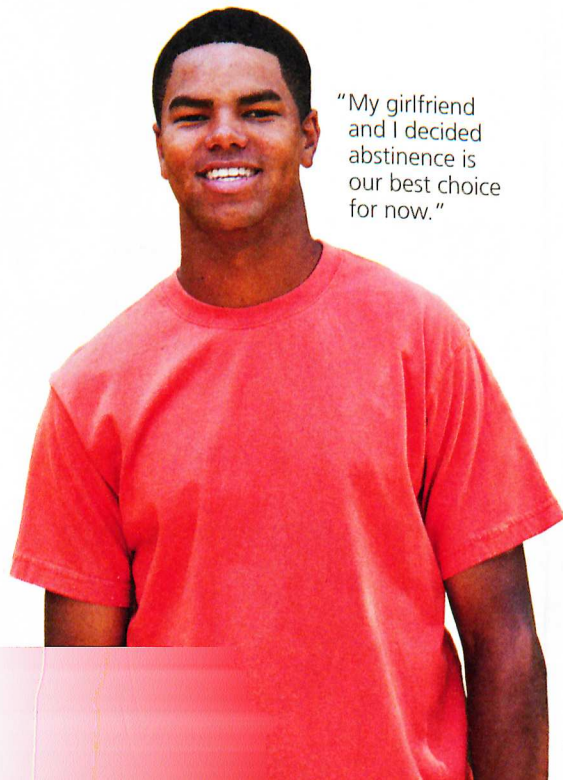
Will I use it the right way every time—even if it's sometimes a hassle?

## Can my partner and I use this method together?

Can I use it by myself if my partner won't help?

## Will I feel embarrassed about using this method?

Will I use it anyway?



"My girlfriend and I decided abstinence is our best choice for now."

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## Do I have religious or moral feelings about using birth control?

Does this method fit with my religious beliefs?

## How do I feel about touching my body?

Do I need to touch my genitals in order to use this method?

**Abstinence—**not having sex—  
is the only sure way  
**NOT** to get pregnant.

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"Condoms work for me because they help protect against pregnancy and STD."

# Method

# What Is It?

# Chances of Not Getting Pregnant\*

# Health Concerns

# Strong Points

# Weak Points

## Abstinence



- Not having sex.
- Can range from no sexual touching at all to everything except intercourse.

100% (if no semen enters vagina).

- None.

- Easy to use.
- Best protection against HIV and other sexually transmitted disease (STD) (if no blood, semen or vaginal fluids are exchanged and if there is no genital touching).

- May feel pressured by friends, boyfriend or girlfriend.
- May be hard not to act on sexual feelings.

## Condoms



- Fits over erect penis and catches sperm when the man "comes."
- Also known as "rubbers."

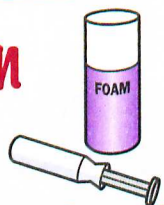
If you are very careful each time—98%.  
If you are not very careful each time—82%.

- Some people are allergic to latex. They can use plastic (polyurethane) condoms.

- Can buy in drugstores.
- Easy to use, easy to carry.
- Used only when needed.
- Latex condoms help protect you from HIV and other STD.

- Must be put on during sex.
- Condoms may irritate vagina or penis.

## Foam Film Suppositories



- Made of chemicals that kill sperm.
- Put into vagina before sex.

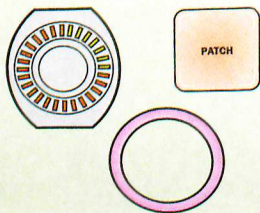
If you are very careful each time—82%.  
If you are not very careful each time—72%.

- None.

- Can buy in drugstores.
- Easy to use, easy to carry.
- Used only when needed.

- Must be put in shortly before sex.
- Can be messy.
- May irritate vagina or penis.
- No protection from HIV/STD.

## Pill, Patch Vaginal Ring



- Pills, a skin patch or a vaginal ring that release artificial hormones.
- Stops ovaries from releasing egg.
- Thickens mucus in cervix (opening to womb), so it's hard for sperm to enter womb.
- Must be prescribed by a health care provider.

If you are very careful each time—more than 99%.  
If you are not very careful each time—91%.

- Few serious problems for young women.
- Very small chance of blood clots, heart attacks and strokes.
- May cause high blood pressure.

- Simple and easy to use.
- Doesn't interfere with sex.
- Less bleeding and cramping during periods.
- Less chance of PID with pill.
- Less chance of ovarian or endometrial cancer with pill.
- Some pills can reduce number of periods in a year.

- May cause weight changes, moodiness, spotting.
- Not ideal while breastfeeding.
- May not be a good method for women over 35 who smoke.
- No protection from HIV/STD.

## Depo-Provera



- A shot of artificial hormones given by a health care provider.
- Stops ovaries from releasing egg.
- Thickens mucus in cervix (opening to womb), so it's hard for sperm to enter womb.

If you are very careful—  
more than 99%.  
If you are not very  
careful—94%.

- Few serious problems for most women.
- Long-term use may temporarily reduce bone density in some women.

- Doesn't interfere with sex.
- Lasts 3 months.
- Often decreases bleeding and cramping associated with periods.
- Safe to use while breastfeeding.
- Less chance of endometrial cancer.

- Must get shot from a health care provider.
- May cause heavy, irregular or light periods, or eventually no period.
- May not be able to get pregnant for several months after stopping.
- May have weight changes, moodiness, headaches or dizziness.
- No protection from HIV/STD.

## Implanon



- Tiny rod put under skin of arm by health care provider.
- Rod slowly releases artificial hormones into bloodstream.
- Stops ovaries from releasing an egg each month.
- Thickens mucus in cervix (opening to womb), so it's hard for sperm to enter womb.

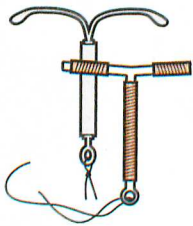
More than 99%.

- Few serious problems for most women.
- Should not be used by women with liver disease, breast cancer or blood clots.

- Can stay in for 3 years.
- Always in place.
- Doesn't interfere with sex.

- May have some spotting between periods, light periods, longer periods or no periods at all.
- Beginning costs are high (\$400–\$650).
- Minor surgery required to insert or remove rod.
- No protection from HIV/STD.

## IUD



- Small device put inside womb by a health care provider.
- Two types: ParaGard (copper) and Mirena (hormones).
- Prevents sperm from fertilizing egg.
- Mirena thickens mucus in cervix (opening to womb), so it's hard for sperm to enter womb.

More than 99%.

- None.

- Always in place.
- Doesn't interfere with sex.
- Lasts 5–10 years.
- Mirena may cause light periods or eventually no periods at all.

- ParaGard may cause more bleeding and cramping during period or spotting between periods.
- No protection from HIV/STD.

## Diaphragm



- Small rubber cup fits inside vagina, over the cervix (opening to the womb).
- Used with contraceptive cream or jelly that kills sperm.
- Must be fitted by a health care provider.

If you are very careful  
each time—94%.  
If you are not very  
careful each time—  
88%.

- Few health problems.
- More bladder infections for some women.
- Very small chance of toxic shock syndrome.

- Can be put in 6 hours before sex.
- Used only when needed.

- Some women say it's hard to put in and take out.
- Can be messy.
- Cream or jelly may irritate vagina or penis.
- Must be left in place 6 hours after sex.
- No protection from HIV/STD.