



# A FEW THINGS BEFORE WE START

If you're having sex and not using any kind of birth control, *you're actually planning on getting pregnant or causing a pregnancy.* It's as simple as that.

If you are having sex, how do you avoid an unplanned pregnancy? Read on...

**Not having sex is the most effective birth control of all.** Bottom line: No sex, no pregnancy. Something else to think about—even though it may seem like everyone's doing it, that's not the case. Some are. Some aren't. And some are just lying. Only about half of high school teens have had sex, and 2 of about every 3 teens who have had sex say they wish they had waited. Something to think about.

**The next best thing to no sex is using protection if you are having sex.** And we mean *every-single-time* protected sex. Using birth control 90% of the time is not good enough.

If you're having sex and find the birth control choices overwhelming, you're not alone! This booklet has some of the most popular birth control methods available listed in order of how effective they are. Not all birth control choices are listed. Please visit [www.StayTeen.org/birth-control-101](http://www.StayTeen.org/birth-control-101) for more detailed info as well as **help with where to get birth control.**

**This is really important.** A lot of people have questions about the effectiveness of different methods of birth control. The effectiveness figures used here reflect *typical* use—couples who used a particular method of birth control pretty well but not perfectly. It accounts for human errors and occasional contraceptive failure. Keep in mind though, typical use rates for teens may be a bit worse than what you see here. Also, **birth control only works when you use it consistently and carefully every single time you have sex. Got it? OK...**

# PLEASE KEEP IN MIND...

> **Pregnancy and STIs.** Although all the methods listed here are good at preventing pregnancy when used correctly, not having sex or using condoms is the only protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

- > **Drugs and drink.** If you're drunk or high, you're not going to make good decisions about sex and protection.
- > **Two is better than one.** One method of birth control is good, two methods are better. Using a hormonal method of birth control *and* a condom is your best protection.
- > **Pressure.** Never, ever let anyone pressure you to do something sexually you don't want to do. You're in charge of your life; you make the decisions and you deal with the consequences!



## WAITING (NOT HAVING SEX)

We'll say it again: The only 100% effective method for avoiding pregnancy is to not have sex. Whether you've had sex before or not, waiting has lots of advantages including no difficult emotional or physical consequences.

**EFFECTIVE: 100%**

*You don't need a doctor or to go to a pharmacy.*

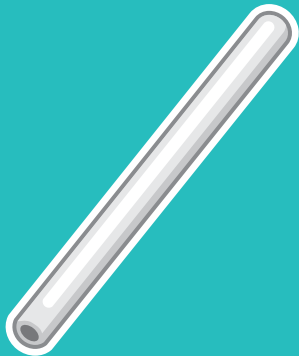


## THE IUD

An IUD (intrauterine device) is a small, flexible plastic “T”-shaped device that is inserted into the uterus. Two types are available—Mirena and Copper T (ParaGard). The Mirena can be left in for up to 5 years, the ParaGard for up to 10 years.

**EFFECTIVE: JUST OVER 99% OF THE TIME**

*You must see a medical professional to get an IUD and to have it removed.*



## THE IMPLANT (IMPLANON)

This is a small rod about the size of a matchstick that is inserted into a woman's arm just below the skin. Once it's in, you can feel it but you can barely see it. Implanon is effective for up to 3 years.

**EFFECTIVE: JUST OVER 99% OF THE TIME**

*You must see a medical professional to get Implanon and to have it removed.*

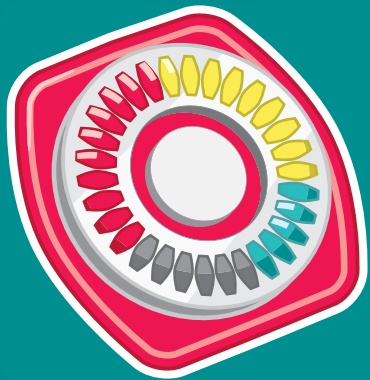


## THE SHOT (DEPO-PROVERA)

The contraceptive shot—known also as Depo-Provera or just plain Depo—is an injection given to a woman every 3 months. The shot must be given by a medical professional, so you'll need to go back to the clinic or doctor's office regularly.

**EFFECTIVE: JUST OVER 97% OF THE TIME**

*You must see a medical professional to get the shot.*



# BIRTH CONTROL PILLS

Sometimes called oral contraception, the pill needs to be taken at the same time every day. Many versions of the pill are available and they're all a little different, so if you have side effects from one type, talk to a health care professional to figure out another type of pill that works for you.

**EFFECTIVE: 92% OF THE TIME**

*You must see a medical professional to get a prescription for the pill.*



## THE RING (NUVARING)

The ring (NuvaRing) is a thin, flexible ring about 2 inches across. The woman inserts the ring into her vagina; when properly inserted, neither she nor her partner can feel it. It stays in for 3 weeks and comes out for 1 week, then a new ring is inserted; this process is repeated every month.

**EFFECTIVE: 92% OF THE TIME**

*You must see a medical professional to get a prescription for the ring.*



## THE PATCH (ORTHO EVRA)

The patch (Ortho Evra) is a thin square of plastic that looks a little like a square Band-Aid. It's sticky on the back and a woman places it on her skin. Each patch is worn for a week and then replaced—you just peel it off like a sticker.

**EFFECTIVE: 92% OF THE TIME**

*You must see a medical professional to get a prescription for the patch.*

# CONDOMS

Condoms for guys are thin sheaths usually made of latex (aka plastic) that are rolled down over the penis and protect against pregnancy and STIs. Condoms for girls, which are newer, kind of look like bigger male condoms turned inside out. They're inserted into the vagina. Condoms should be put on before sex and taken off after sex is over.

**EFFECTIVE: MALE 85% OF THE TIME**  
**FEMALE 79% OF THE TIME**

*You can buy male condoms in most drugstores and online as well as find them in clinics. Female condoms are available in some drugstores and online as well as in some clinics.*



# MYTHS

There are a whole lot of myths out there about sex and birth control. Here are a few that we hear a lot. Every single one of these is false, so if you hear them, don't believe them!

For more myths visit:

[www.StayTeen.org/myths](http://www.StayTeen.org/myths)

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

**MYTH:** You can't get pregnant if the guy pulls out before he ejaculates.

**MYTH:** You can't get pregnant if the girl is on top.

**MYTH:** You can't get pregnant if the girl douches, takes a bath, or urinates immediately after sex.

