

Birth control methods (contraceptives) are used to prevent pregnancy. Some of them can be found at your pharmacy and some require a visit to a health care provider (such as a nurse midwife, nurse practitioner, physician, or physician assistant). Contraceptives listed below with an asterisk (*) use hormones to prevent pregnancy. The contraceptive methods are in order so that the most effective ones are listed first.

Emergency contraception can prevent pregnancy after any instance of unprotected sexual intercourse. Most women can safely use emergency contraception pills, even if they cannot use birth control pills regularly. Visit www.not-2-late.com to find out where to obtain it.

	Method	How to Use	Additional Information	Postpartum Use
Most Effective (typically prevents pregnancy >99% of the time)	Abstinence/ Outercourse	Do not have vaginal intercourse		Can be used right away
	Female sterilization: non-surgical (Essure®) or surgical (Laparoscopy, mini-laparotomy, laparotomy)	Procedure done by health care provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lasts a lifetime • Post-procedure follow up to check sperm count is very important • Permanent method that cannot be reversed 	Usually done 6 weeks after delivery
	Male sterilization (vasectomy)	Procedure done by health care provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lasts a lifetime • Permanent method that cannot be reversed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lasts a lifetime • Post-procedure follow up to check sperm count is very important • Permanent method that cannot be reversed
	Intrauterine device (IUD; ParaGard®)	Inserted into uterus by health care provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used up to 10 years • Fertility will return very soon after it is removed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be inserted into uterus right after caesarian or vaginal delivery • Can be used about 4 to 6 weeks after caesarian or vaginal delivery • Can be used by women who are breastfeeding or are not breastfeeding
	*Intrauterine system (IUS; Mirena®)	Inserted into uterus by health care provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often makes periods lighter or less painful • Offers protection against some cancers • Can be used for up to 5 years • Fertility will return very soon after it is removed 	<p>Breastfeeding women: Can be used by woman about 6 weeks after delivery</p> <p>Women who are not breastfeeding: Can be used about 4 to 6 weeks after delivery by women</p>
*Implant (Implanon®)	Inserted by health care provider into arm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often makes periods lighter or less painful • Offers protection against uterine cancer • Can be used for up to 3 years • Fertility will return very soon after it is removed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be used 6 weeks after delivery • Can be used by women who are breastfeeding and women who are not breastfeeding 	

	Method	How to Use	Additional Information	Postpartum Use
Very Effective (typically prevents pregnancy 91% - 99% of the time)	*Injectables (Depo-Provera®)	Get intramuscular or subcutaneous injection monthly every 12 weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes periods lighter/less painful Lessens cramps Provides protection against some cancers & pelvic inflammatory disease Shot lasts 12 weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be used 6 weeks after delivery Can be used by women who are breastfeeding and women who are not breastfeeding
	*Pills	Swallow pill every day at approximately the same time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes periods lighter/less painful Offers protection against some cancers & breast disease Need to take pill every day Fertility will return very soon after last pill is taken 	<p>Breastfeeding women:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can begin using progestin-only pills starting 6 weeks after delivery Can begin to use pills with progestin and estrogen 6 months after delivery <p>Women who are not breastfeeding: Can begin using any pills 3 weeks after delivery</p>
	*Patch (OrthoEvra®)	Apply one patch to skin each week for 3 weeks in a row, then remove patch for 1 week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes periods lighter/less painful May protect against some cancers & breast disease Each patch lasts 1 week Fertility will return very soon after patch is removed 	<p>Breastfeeding women: Can begin using 6 months after delivery</p> <p>Women who are not breastfeeding: Can begin using 3 weeks after delivery</p>
	*Vaginal ring (NuvaRing®)	Insert ring into vagina for 3 weeks, then remove for 1 week	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Makes periods lighter/less painful May protect against some cancers & breast disease Each ring lasts 1 month Fertility will return very soon after ring is removed 	<p>Breastfeeding women: Can begin using 6 months after delivery</p> <p>Women who are not breastfeeding: Can begin using 3 weeks after delivery</p>
Moderately Effective (typically prevents pregnancy 81% - 90% of the time)	Male condom (known as "rubbers")	Apply to penis immediately before sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides protection against almost all sexually transmitted infections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can use immediately after delivery Lubricated condoms recommended to help with increase in vaginal dryness after delivery
	Diaphragm	Insert into vagina with spermicide before sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep diaphragm in vagina for at least 6 hours after sex; do not keep diaphragm in vagina for more than 24 hours Does not protect against HIV, but does offer some protection against sexually transmitted infections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be used 6 weeks after delivery Patients with diaphragms fitted prior to pregnancy should be refitted for a diaphragm
	Sponge (for women who have not had a full term pregnancy)	Insert into vagina up to 24 hours before sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lasts up to 24 hours Keep sponge in vagina for at least 6 hours after sex; do not keep sponge in vagina for more than 24 to 30 hours 	Avoid until 6 weeks after delivery
Effective (typically prevents pregnancy up to 80% of the time)	Female condom	Insert into vagina up to 8 hours before sex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides protection against almost all sexually transmitted infections 	Can use immediately after delivery
	Cervical cap (FemCap®, or Lea's Shield®)	Insert into vagina immediately before sex		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can use immediately after delivery Patients who were fitted with a cervical cap prior to pregnancy should be refitted after a delivery
	Withdrawal	Man removes penis from vagina and area near vagina prior to ejaculation		Can use immediately after delivery
	Spermicide	Insert into vagina no more the 1 hour before sex		Can use immediately after delivery
	Fertility awareness (known as "natural family planning")	Monitor cycle to determine when fertility likely/unlikely		Avoid until 6 weeks after delivery