

Birth Control Method Comparison Chart

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Method	Effectiveness at Preventing Pregnancy	Protects Against STI's	Advantages	Disadvantages	Over-the-Counter (OTC) or Prescription (Rx)
Implant (small, thin, flexible tube inserted under skin of inner arm)	99.9%	No	Do not have to take every day Lasts up to 3 years	Insertion may be uncomfortable Can be expensive	Rx
Depo-Provera ("The Shot")	99.7%	No	Convenient - one injection prevents pregnancy for 11-13 weeks Birth control effects begin as soon as first injection	Potential side effects include: irregular bleeding, weight gain, headache, stomach pain, dizziness, irritability, decreased sex drive Possible 12-18 month delay in getting pregnant after last injection May cause bone loss	Rx
Oral Contraceptives ("The Pill")	92-97%	No	Makes menstrual periods more regular and lighter Decreases menstrual cramps and acne	Must be taken every day at the same time Can't be used by women with certain medical conditions	Rx
Contraceptive Patch	92%	No	Easy to use Small Stays on well (but must be replaced weekly)	Can't be used by women with certain medical conditions Possible skin reactions	Rx
Vaginal Ring	92%	No	Easy to use Can be worn for three weeks (must be taken out and replaced monthly) Effects fertility one month at a time	Can't be used by women with certain medical conditions Possibility of expulsion from the body	Rx
Emergency Contraception ("Morning after Pill" or Plan B)	89%	No	Reduces the risk of pregnancy by 89% when started within 72 hours after unprotected intercourse	Must be taken as soon as possible after unprotected intercourse Possible side effects, include nausea, vomiting, and irregular bleeding	OTC
Male Condom	84%	Yes	Easy to carry Actively involves the male partner in contraception Helps prevent STIs	Decreases spontaneity May break during use, especially if it is used improperly	OTC

Content adapted from the American Sexual Health Association