### Birth Control Comparison Chart

#### HORMONAL METHODS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency Contraception Morning After Pill</th>
<th>The Pill Oral Contraceptive</th>
<th>The Patch</th>
<th>Vaginal Ring</th>
<th>The Shot: Depo Provera or DMIPA</th>
<th>Implanon Implant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is it?</strong></td>
<td>Emergency Contraception Pills prevent pregnancy after sex. Also called Morning After Pill. Brand name is Plan B. Contains a short burst of a high dose of the hormones in birth control pills.</td>
<td>The Shot is an injection of progestin, a synthetic version of body’s natural progesterone. Lasts for 12 weeks (3 months).</td>
<td>What is it? The Ring is a thin, clear, flexible 2 inch circle placed inside the vagina that slowly releases synthetic hormones similar to estrogen and progesterone.</td>
<td>What is it? The Shot is an injection of progestin, a synthetic version of body’s natural progesterone. Lasts for 12 weeks (3 months).</td>
<td>What is it? A soft flexible rod about 1½ inches long that slowly releases synthetic hormones similar to progesterone. It is inserted by a clinician under the skin in a woman’s upper inner arm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How it works:</strong></td>
<td>Decreases chance of ovulation, affects the lining of uterus, thickens cervical mucus to stop sperm from entering the uterus, prevents fertilization.</td>
<td>Prevents ovaries from releasing an egg (ovulation), affects the lining of uterus, thickens cervical mucus which stops sperm from entering the uterus, prevents fertilization.</td>
<td>Prevents ovaries from releasing an egg (ovulation), affects the lining of uterus, thickens cervical mucus which stops sperm from entering the uterus, prevents fertilization.</td>
<td>Prevents ovaries from releasing an egg (ovulation), affects the lining of uterus, thickens cervical mucus which stops sperm from entering the uterus.</td>
<td>Prevents ovaries from releasing an egg (ovulation), affects the lining of uterus, thickens cervical mucus which stops sperm from entering the uterus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How to use:</strong></td>
<td>Swallow one pill daily, at the same time each day.</td>
<td>Apply one Patch per week for three weeks. No Patch on the fourth week. Then start the cycle over again.</td>
<td>A woman inserts the Ring into her vagina and leaves it for three weeks. On the fourth week she removes it and has a period, or she can leave it in place and have a period. Then on the fifth week she inserts a new ring.</td>
<td>A woman injects the shot into her arm.</td>
<td>Requires 4 trips to clinic each year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Impacts:</strong></td>
<td>May cause nausea, breast tenderness, weight gain or loss, water retention, increased blood pressure, mood changes, headaches. Usually decreases menstrual cramps and amount of bleeding. Decreases chance of ovarian cancer. May increase chance of breast cancer. Not recommended for smokers over 35 or women with past heart attack or stroke, chest pain, blood clots, some cancers, liver disease, or high blood pressure.</td>
<td>May cause unusual bleeding. May be irregular for 3 to 6 months. May cause weight gain. May increase chance of breast cancer.</td>
<td>May cause unusual bleeding. May be irregular for 3 to 6 months. May cause weight gain.</td>
<td>Not recommended for women over 18 who have had tubal ligation, breast cancer, liver disease, or high blood pressure.</td>
<td>Not recommended for women over 35 or women with past heart attack or stroke, chest pain, blood clots, some cancers, liver disease, or high blood pressure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Notes:</strong></td>
<td>A woman’s “period” can occur monthly, every 3 months, or not at all, depending on how often she takes the hormone pills. Taking antibiotics or barbiturates may make The Pill less effective.</td>
<td>Not recommended for smokers over 35 or women with past heart attack or stroke, chest pain, blood clots, some cancers, liver disease, or high blood pressure.</td>
<td>Nor recommended for smokers over 35 or women with past heart attack or stroke, chest pain, blood clots, some cancers, liver disease, or high blood pressure.</td>
<td>Nor recommended for women over 18 who have had tubal ligation, breast cancer, liver disease, or high blood pressure.</td>
<td>Nor recommended for women over 35 or women with past heart attack or stroke, chest pain, blood clots, some cancers, liver disease, or high blood pressure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access:</strong></td>
<td>If under 18, you must have a prescription. If over 18, you can get Plan B at a pharmacy counter with ID to prove your age.</td>
<td>Prescription required.</td>
<td>Prescription required.</td>
<td>Prescription required.</td>
<td>Prescription required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*brought to you by Feminist Women's Health Center which operates Cedar River Clinics in WA State*
## Birth Control Comparison Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cervical Cover</th>
<th>Diaphragm (with jelly or cream)</th>
<th>Spermicidal Foam, Cream, Gel, Suppository, Film</th>
<th>Sponge</th>
<th>Female Condom</th>
<th>Male Condom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is it?</strong></td>
<td>This is a cup or cap shaped device, 1 to 2 inches tall that covers a woman's cervix. Brand names are Lea's Shield and FemCap. Made of medical-grade silicone.</td>
<td><strong>What is it?</strong> A soft flexible rubber dome or cup about 2½ inches across that a woman fills with spermicide and inserts into vagina over the cervix. It is held in place by vaginal muscles.</td>
<td><strong>What is it?</strong> Spermicides are chemicals, usually N-oxynol-9, that kill sperm. Can be made much more effective by using in combination with condom, cervical cap, or diaphragm.</td>
<td><strong>What is it?</strong> A soft, small round bowl-shaped piece of synthetic sponge with loop attached. Contains spermicide.</td>
<td><strong>What is it?</strong> A thin latex cover that fits over the hard penis. Also known as ‘rubber’ or ‘glove.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How it works:</strong></td>
<td>Creates a barrier that blocks sperm from passing into the uterus and prevents fertilization. Works best with spermicide added.</td>
<td><strong>How it works:</strong> Creates a physical and chemical barrier. Stops sperm and prevents fertilization.</td>
<td><strong>How to use:</strong> Follow instructions on container. Insert foam, gel, cream, suppository or vaginal contraceptive film (VCF) into vagina over cervix. Insert at least 15 minutes and up to two hours before intercourse. Repeat for each act of intercourse. Add more if one hour has passed before intercourse. Do not douche for at least 8 hours. A void not having enough in the container by buying extra.</td>
<td><strong>How it works:</strong> The Sponge is both a chemical and physical barrier. It blocks sperm, absorbs and kills sperm.</td>
<td><strong>How it works:</strong> Traps sperm inside vagina so it cannot enter woman's body. Put on before any genital contact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How to use:</strong></td>
<td>Before sex, a woman places a small amount of spermicide gel or cream into the cap, then inserts the device into her vagina over her cervix. Must leave it in place for 8 hours after intercourse. Only need to apply spermicide once, even if intercourse is repeated. Can be put in up to 48 hours before sex.</td>
<td><strong>Health Impacts:</strong> Can be messy, can interrupt sex play. Some women have allergy to spermicide or latex. Spermicide tastes bad. May increase chance of bladder infections. Get a new size if you gain or lose more than 15 pounds.</td>
<td><strong>Health Impacts:</strong> Can be messy, may interrupt sex play. Tastes bad. Possible allergic reaction or vaginal irritation. Foaming types may irritate more than film or cream. Research indicates that spermicide increases the risk of HIV in sex workers who use it many times a day. When used frequently, it may irritate the vagina making it easier to catch HIV/STI.</td>
<td><strong>Health Impacts:</strong> May cause irritation of the vagina if a woman is allergic to the spermicide. Research indicates that spermicide increases the risk of HIV in sex workers when used frequently.</td>
<td><strong>Health Impacts:</strong> Latex or polyurethane types block STIs and HIV. Very effective at preventing pregnancy when used with spermicides. May decrease sensation for male. Interruption may cause loss of erection. Possible allergy to latex. Lambskin or ‘natural’ membrane condoms do not protect against HIV/STIs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Impacts:</strong></td>
<td>Insertion and removal become easier with practice. Some women have allergy to spermicides. Giving birth affects the fit so go to your clinic for a new one after you give birth. Less reliable if you previously gave birth.</td>
<td><strong>Notes:</strong> Not recommended if you have had toxic shock syndrome. More effective with good education and help to practice putting device over cervix.</td>
<td><strong>Notes:</strong> Not recommended if you have had toxic shock syndrome.</td>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> Less effective (40-80%) for women who have previously given birth.</td>
<td><strong>Note:</strong> Bulky. Makes noise during movement. May be awkward in beginning but gets easier over time. New styles are being designed and may become available soon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access:</strong></td>
<td>Clinic visit required. FemCap size is based upon whether or not you have given birth. Lea's Shield is one size fits all.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Access:</strong> Condoms are cheap and easy to buy. Often available for free.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

*brought to you by Feminist Women's Health Center which operates Cedar River Clinics in WA State*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>KNOWLEDGE-BASED METHODS</th>
<th>LONG TERM OR PERMANENT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What is it?</strong></td>
<td><strong>IUD: Mirena Intra Uterine Device</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fertility Awareness</td>
<td><strong>IUD: Paragard T Intra Uterine Device</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal Pulling Out</td>
<td><strong>Sterilization</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effectiveness</strong>: 80% - 98%</td>
<td><strong>Effectiveness</strong>: 99.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Effectiveness</strong>: 73% - 96%</td>
<td><strong>Effectiveness</strong>: 99.2% - 99.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How to use</strong>: To prevent pregnancy, don’t have penis-in-vagina intercourse.</td>
<td><strong>Effectiveness</strong>: 99.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Health Impacts</strong>: No health risks or side effects. Increases knowledge and awareness of woman’s body. Can increase communication between partners. Does not protect against HIV/STIs.</td>
<td><strong>How it works</strong>: Prevents egg and sperm from meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Access</strong>: Free and available anytime.</td>
<td><strong>What is it?</strong> For Females, a vasectomy is an outpatient procedure to close or cut fallopian tubes to prevent eggs from traveling through, thus no eggs are available for fertilization. Two types are available for women: surgical tubal ligation or nonsurgical blockage of the tubes with Essure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sex without risk**

- **What is it?** Fertility Awareness is learning the changes an individual woman’s body goes through during her menstrual cycle to determine her fertile time (the days she is most likely to get pregnant) and then not having sex or using a barrier method during the fertile time.
- **Health Impacts**: No health risks or side effects. Increases knowledge and awareness of woman’s body. Can increase communication between partners. Does not protect against HIV/STIs.
- **Access**: Free and available anytime.

**Fertility Awareness**

- **What is it?** The man pulls his penis out of the vagina before climax and ejaculation (before coming). Also called “coitus interruptus.” Depends on male’s self knowledge and self control.
- **How to use**: Male should urinate and wipe the tip of penis before intercourse. Then he must pull completely out before coming. Effectiveness increases when couples work together. Even sperm outside the vagina on the vulva can travel inside and cause pregnancy.
- **Health Impacts**: Drugs, alcohol, young age or lack of sexual experience can reduce effectiveness. Can be difficult for teens to use. Less effective for men who have multiple orgasms. Can increase communication between partners.
- **Access**: Requires thermometer, calendar, charts, cycle beads, speculum, mirror, flashlight, etc.

**Withdrawal Pulling Out**

- **What is it?** The small (1 to 1½ inch) plastic device with a string attached, shaped like a T. Releases synthetic progesterone hormone. Inserted through the cervix into the uterus at a clinic.
- **How it works**: IUD causes changes in the cervical mucous, fallopian tubes and the lining of the uterus to slow or stop movement of sperm and egg to prevent pregnancy.
- **Health Impacts**: May cause irregular bleeding or periods may stop. Each month check by using finger to feel for IUD’s string at cervix. The risk of uterine infection goes up if you or your partner has lots of other partners.
- **Note**: Lasts 5 years. Removal by a clinician is fast and easy.
- **Access**: Clinic visit required.

**IUD: Mirena Intra Uterine Device**

- **What is it?** A small (1 to 1½ inch) plastic device with a string attached, shaped like a T with a tiny copper wire wrapped around the stem. Inserted through the cervix into the uterus at a clinic.
- **How it works**: IUD causes changes in the cervical mucous, fallopian tubes and the lining of the uterus to slow or stop movement of sperm and egg to prevent pregnancy.
- **Health Impacts**: May cause more painful, heavier periods. Should not be used by women who are allergic to copper. Each month check by using finger to feel for IUD’s string at cervix. The risk of uterine infection goes up if you or your partner has lots of other partners.
- **Note**: Lasts 10 or more years. Removal by a clinician is fast and easy. Cost effective over time.
- **Access**: Clinic visit required.

**Sterilization**

- **How it works**: Removes the cervix using a speculum and mirror, and taking basal body temperature. This combined information is used to determine beginning and end of fertile time. Cycle beads can help keep track. More effective when the male partner is involved in planning and use.
- **Health Impacts**: Changes in the cervical mucous, fallopian tubes and the lining of the uterus to slow or stop movement of sperm and egg to prevent pregnancy.
- **Note**: Clinic visit required.
- **Access**: Doctor required.

**IUD: Paragard T Intra Uterine Device**

- **What is it?** A small (1 to 1½ inch) plastic device with a string attached, shaped like a T with a tiny copper wire wrapped around the stem. Inserted through the cervix into the uterus at a clinic.
- **How it works**: IUD causes changes in the cervical mucous, fallopian tubes and the lining of the uterus to slow or stop movement of sperm and egg to prevent pregnancy.
- **Health Impacts**: May cause more painful, heavier periods. Should not be used by women who are allergic to copper. Each month check by using finger to feel for IUD’s string at cervix. The risk of uterine infection goes up if you or your partner has lots of other partners.
- **Note**: Lasts 10 years. Removal by a clinician is fast and easy.
- **Access**: Clinic visit required.

**Birth Control Comparison Chart**

brought to you by Feminist Women’s Health Center which operates Cedar River Clinics in WA State
### Birth Control Comparison Chart

**HORMONAL:** Add hormones to a woman’s body to alter her menstrual cycle and reproductive organs.*

**BARRIER:** Place a short-term physical or chemical wall between egg and sperm.**

**KNOWLEDGE-BASED:** Use knowledge, awareness and information to guide decisions about sexual activity.

**LONGTERM OR PERMANENT:** Physically alter reproductive organs.

* Many people wonder if hormones are safe? The effects of hormones are both short term and long term. Women should know there is a short term very rare but serious risk of heart attack or stroke, and possible long term benefit of reduced risk of ovarian cancer in old age.

** The only way to block HIV is a condom.

### About Cedar River Clinics (800-572-4223)
- We have a vision of a world where all women freely make their own decisions regarding their bodies, reproduction and sexuality—a world where women can fulfill their own unique potential and live healthy, whole lives.
- We provide first and second trimester abortion, medication abortion, STI testing and treatment, pregnancy testing, well woman exam, pap test. Free birth control under Take Charge.
- Located in Tacoma, Renton, and Yakima, Washington State, USA.

Published in March 2008 by Feminist Women’s Health Center which operates Cedar River Clinics.

For colorful paper copies contact info@CedarRiverClinics.org, 800-572-4223, or 106 East E Street, Yakima, WA 98901.

---

**Use this chart to compare methods and find contraceptive choices to fit you.**

Women and their partners use birth control to prevent pregnancy when they are not yet ready to start a family, and to determine the number and spacing of their children. They also use birth control when they are finished having babies. They may choose different methods for different stages in life. The various methods affect individual women differently. No one method is best for everyone.

Choosing contraception (birth control) is an important decision. This poster may help answer your questions, such as:

- How do I use it?
- How does it work?
- How effective is it?
- Will I use it every time?
- How will it affect my partner?
- Are there side-effects?
- What will I do if it doesn’t work?
- Where do I get it?

**Getting Birth Control**

Teens and low-income women and men can usually get low-cost birth control through community clinics or public health centers. Many health insurance plans cover birth control. IF you live in Washington State, apply for a year of free birth control paid by the Take Charge program. Call 800-770-4334. If a pharmacy refuses to give you birth control, please let us know.

**Effectiveness**

Effectiveness: is the rate of success at preventing pregnancy per 1000 women over one year’s time. If a method is listed as 99.5% effective then 995 out of 1000 women will not get pregnant in one year on average (and 5 out of 1000 will get pregnant). When two rates are listed, the lower rate is “typical” use. The higher rate is “perfect” use when the method is used correctly and consistently. The rates were published in the 2004 book *Contraceptive Technology*. For comparison, 850 out of 1000 women will get pregnant in one year with no birth control.

**Double Up**

Simultaneous use of two methods reduces chance of pregnancy. Some good combinations are a male condom and a cervical cap, spermicide and a male condom, or withdrawal and spermicide.
Emergency Contraception Plan B = Morning After Pill
You can prevent pregnancy after sex by taking Plan B Emergency Contraception. Use Plan B if you were not planning to have sex, or if you were coerced or attacked. Call 1-888-NOT-2-LATE or go to www.NOT-2-LATE.com to find a location near you. Plan B does not cause abortion; it is a completely different medication than the Abortion Pill. The sooner you take Plan B after intercourse, the more effective it is.

HIV/AIDS and STI
Despite many choices for birth control, there is only ONE way to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted infections (STI). Partners must use a female or male condom, dental dam or plastic wrap to prevent blood, semen or vaginal secretions from passing from one partner to another during vaginal, anal or oral sex.

Pap Tests
Regular Pap Tests are the best way to detect early abnormal cervical cells that may lead to cancer. A common sexually transmitted infection called HPV (Human PapillomaVirus) can cause cervical cancer. To protect against forms of HPV, the HPV Vaccine is an option for girls ages 9 to 26.

Relationships
Open and honest conversation with partners, parents, and friends can help in choosing a method and in making it more effective. People who use birth control can learn a lot from each other.

Breast Feeding
Breast feeding is 98-99% effective for birth control, but only when all three of the following things are true: when a woman breast feeds exclusively (no formula or baby food) with feedings no more than 4-6 hours apart, when it is less than 6 months since she gave birth, and when her periods have not returned after giving birth. Furthermore, breast feeding women may want to avoid using hormonal birth control because small amounts of the hormones are passed to the baby in the milk, and some types of hormonal birth control decrease milk production.

Abortion
If contraception doesn’t work or isn’t used and pregnancy results, you have three options: abortion, parenting, or adoption. Abortion does not stop a woman from getting pregnant in the future.

Human Rights
Using birth control is a personal decision. Government, parents, friends and partners should support your decisions. If someone attempts to stop you, force you, or undermine your decisions about birth control, it may be a sign they want to control other aspects of your life. You have a fundamental human right to make your own decisions about your body, sexuality and reproduction. The purpose of birth control is to allow a woman to enjoy a full range of sexual expression without fear of getting pregnant. Every woman has a human right to her sexuality.