

BIRTH CONTROL TOOLKIT

What is Birth Control?

If you have a uterus and ovaries, you can become pregnant if you have sex with someone who produces sperm. There are many ways to prevent pregnancy—from prescription options like intrauterine devices (IUDs) to over-the-counter choices such as condoms.

Resources like [Bedsider.org](https://www.bedsider.org) offer detailed information on all birth control methods to help you and your partner figure out what works best for you. Finding the right method may take some trial and error. If you're sexually active and want to avoid pregnancy, it's important to explore your options. Using birth control **together with condoms** offers extra protection and peace of mind. Most methods are safe and highly effective when used correctly.

Types of Birth Control

The best method is the one that fits your lifestyle. A healthcare provider can help you choose what's right for you.

Hormonal Methods

- **Pill** – taken daily.
- **Shot** – injection every 3 months.
- **Patch** – placed on skin weekly.
- **Vaginal Ring** – worn inside the vagina, changed monthly.
- **Implant** – a small rod inserted in the arm, effective for up to 3–5 years.
- **Hormonal IUD** – placed in the uterus, effective 3–8 years depending on type.

Barrier Methods

- **Condoms** – external or internal, protect against both pregnancy and STIs.
- **Diaphragm, Cervical Cap, Sponge** – placed inside the vagina before sex.
- **Spermicide** – gel/foam that kills sperm, often used with other barriers.

Non-Hormonal / Other Methods

- **Copper IUD** – hormone-free, effective up to 12 years.
- **Pull-Out Method (Withdrawal)** – requires the partner to withdraw before ejaculation.
 - Less effective than other methods (about 78% with typical use).

Permanent Methods

- **Tubal Sterilization** (removal or closing of fallopian tubes).
- **Vasectomy** (procedure for people with testes, prevents sperm release).

EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION (EC)

Sometimes accidents happen—like a broken condom, missed pill, or unprotected sex. Emergency contraception can prevent pregnancy by delaying ovulation.

Acting quickly matters: the sooner you use EC, the more effective it will be.

TYPES OF EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION



Over-the-Counter pills (Plan B, Next Choice, My Way, One Dose)

- Available at most drugstores, no ID or prescription needed.
- Most effective when taken within 72 hours, but can work up to 5 days after unprotected sex.
- Works less effectively for people over ~165 lbs.



Prescription pill (ella)

- Must be prescribed by a healthcare provider.
- Effective up to 5 days after unprotected sex.
- Works better than Plan B for people with higher body weight, but effectiveness may decrease over ~195 lbs.



IUD (Copper IUD)

- The most effective form of emergency contraception.
- Must be inserted by a healthcare provider within 5 days.
- Can also serve as long-term birth control if you choose to keep it.



THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

Timing:

The sooner EC is taken, the better it works.

Side Effects:

Some people may experience nausea, fatigue, or headaches. These usually go away quickly.

Follow-Up:

If your period is more than a week late after using EC, take a pregnancy test.

Emergency contraception is a safe and effective way to prevent pregnancy when taken promptly. Understanding your options and knowing how to access them empowers you to make informed choices about your reproductive health.



Important Note: The emergency contraception is **not** the same as the abortion pill, and will not terminate a pregnancy is someone is already pregnant.

Resources:

Bedsider.org ↗ – Comprehensive birth control info.

Healthy Bodies Safer Sex: A Comprehensive Guide for Trans and Non-Binary People ↗

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