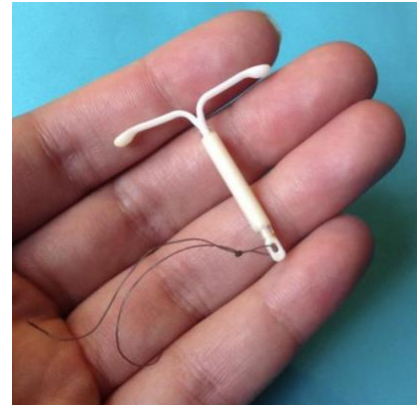


### **What is it? The Coil**

There are two types of coil, one with copper (an IUD) and another with extra hormones (an IUS).

### **How do they work?**

- Both are inserted into the womb by a nurse or doctor.
- The IUD releases copper which kills the egg and the sperm and in doing so stops fertilisation.
- The IUS thins the lining of the womb so a fertilised egg cannot implant itself into the lining of the womb.



### **Advantages:**

- Both are more than 99% effective against pregnancy.
- They last for 5 to 10 years, depending on the type.
- They can be put in at any time during your menstrual cycle, as long as you're at risk of pregnancy.
- It can be taken out at any time by a specially trained doctor or nurse.
- The IUS stops periods altogether in most women which is great if they are heavy.

### **Disadvantages:**

- They do not protect against sexually transmitted infections, so condoms should be used as well.
- Your periods can be heavier, longer or more painful in the first few months after an IUD is put in. You might get spotting or bleeding between periods.
- It can be uncomfortable when the device is put in, but painkillers will help.

### **A quirky fact:**

When nomadic traders needed to keep a female camel from getting pregnant during long treks across the desert, they put stones into the animal's uterus.

## What is it: Condom

- Condoms are put onto a man's penis to prevent pregnancy by stopping sperm from meeting an egg. Some people use a 'female condom' - worn inside the vagina to stop semen from getting into the womb.

## How does it work?

- Take the condom out of the packet, being careful not to touch the inner surface with jewellery or fingernails.
- Place the condom over the tip of the erect penis and roll the base of the penis.
- If the condom won't roll down, you may be holding it the wrong way round. If this happens, it may have sperm on so throw it away and try again with a new one.
- After sex, withdraw the penis, while it's still erect, holding onto the condom.
- Remove the condom from the penis, being careful not to spill any semen.
- Throw the condom away in a bin, not down the toilet.
- If you have sex again, use a new condom.
- Condoms should display the UK kite mark symbol or CE symbol:



## Advantages:

- When used correctly and consistently, they are a good way to prevent pregnancy.
- They help to protect both partners from STIs.
- You only need to use them when you have sex – they do not need advance preparation and are suitable for unplanned sex.
- In most cases, there are no medical side effects from using condoms.
- They are easy to get hold of and come in a variety of shapes, sizes and flavours.

## Disadvantages:

- Some couples find that using condoms interrupts sex – to get around this, try to make using a condom part of foreplay.
- Condoms are very strong but may split or tear if not used properly.
- Some people may be allergic to latex, plastic or spermicides, but you can get condoms that are less likely to cause an allergic reaction.
- The man has to pull out after he has ejaculated and before his penis goes soft.
- Oil-based lubricants – such as lotion, body oil or Vaseline can damage the condom and make it more likely to split.
- Condoms can be unreliable, if not used correctly.

**Important Note:** If the couple are worried that the condom might have been damaged, they should still go to the sexual health clinic (or GP) for emergency contraception.

**Quirky fact:** Condoms, as we know them today, were first developed during the English Civil War when soldiers were given sheaths made from fish and sheep intestines to protect them from sexually transmitted infections.

**What is it? The Combined pill** - contains 2 hormones, oestrogen and progesterone.

### How does it work?

- The pill stops the ovaries from releasing an egg each month (ovulation).
- The combined pill is taken for 21 days with a 7 day break each month. Women get a period during this break.
- You need to take the pill at around the same time every day.
- You could get pregnant if you do not do this, or if you miss a pill, or vomit or have severe diarrhoea.



### Advantages:

- It does not interrupt sex and is very effective against pregnancy
- It makes your periods lighter and less painful and can also help PMS (pre-menstrual syndrome)
- The combined pill reduces the risk of cancer of the ovaries, womb and colon.
- There is no evidence that the pill will make you gain weight.
- It can reduce acne, which is why some girls may take the pill but have no intention of having sex.

### Disadvantages:

- It can cause side effects at first, such as headaches, nausea, breast tenderness and mood swings – these normally settle after the first few months.
- Some medicines may make the pill less effective.
- Some bleeding or spotting is common in the first few months of using the pill
- The pill does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), so use a condom as well
- The combined pill can increase the risk of heart disease, blood clots and breast and cervical cancer, but the doctor always makes sure it's safe for you before they give it.

**Important Note:** If a woman does forget to take her pill, or is worried that it might not work, she should still go to the sexual health clinic (or her GP) where emergency contraception could be given.

### Quirky fact:

The pill was introduced into the UK on the NHS in 1961 and until 1967 was prescribed to married women.

**What is it? The Mini Pill** - contains progesterone (pronounced *pro-jest-o-jen*)

**How does it work?**

- The mini pill stops the ovaries from releasing an egg each month.
- The mini pill is taken every day.
- You need to take the pill at around the same time every day.
- You could get pregnant if you do not do this, or if you miss a pill, or vomit or have severe diarrhoea.



**Advantages:**

- It does not interrupt sex and is very effective against pregnancy
- There is no evidence that the pill will make you gain weight.
- It can reduce acne, which is why some girls may take the pill even if they are not having sex.

**Disadvantages:**

- It can cause side effects at first, such as headaches, nausea, breast tenderness and mood swings – these normally settle after the first few months.
- Some medicines may make the pill less effective.
- Some bleeding or spotting is common in the first few months of using the pill
- The mini pill does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), so use a condom as well

**Important Note:** If a woman forgets her pill, or is worried that it might not work, she should still go to the sexual health clinic (or her GP) where she can get emergency contraception.

**Quirky fact:**

When the pill was first available on the NHS women had to be married to get it from the Doctor.

**What is it:** Contraceptive diaphragm or cap

**How does it work?**

- A contraceptive diaphragm or cap is a circular dome made of thin, soft silicone that's inserted into the vagina before sex.
- It covers the cervix so sperm can't get into the womb (uterus) to fertilise an egg.



**Advantages:**

- You only need to use a diaphragm or cap when you want to have sex
- You can put it in at a convenient time before having sex (use extra spermicide if you have it in for more than 3 hours)
- There are usually no serious associated health risks or side effects
- You're in control of your contraception

**Disadvantages:**

- It's not as effective as other types of contraception, and it relies on you remembering to use it and using it correctly
- it can take time to learn how to use it
- Putting it in can interrupt sex
- Cystitis (bladder infection) can be a problem for some women who use a diaphragm or cap
- Latex and spermicide can cause irritation in some women and their sexual partners.
- It doesn't provide protection against STIs

**Important Note:** this method of contraception is not very popular nowadays in the UK.


**Quirky fact:**

In ancient Egypt, dried crocodile dung was inserted into the vagina so that it would form an impenetrable barrier – not recommended today!

### What is it: The Implant

The contraceptive implant (Nexplanon) is a small flexible plastic rod that's placed under the skin in your upper arm by a doctor or nurse.

### How does it work?

- A local anaesthetic is used to numb the area on the inside of the woman's upper arm.
  - The implant is then inserted under her skin – it only takes a few minutes to put in and feels like having an injection.
  - She won't need any stitches after the implant has been fitted.
- 
- The implant steadily releases the hormone progestogen (pronounced *pro-jest-o-jen*) into your bloodstream, which prevents the release of an egg each month (ovulation) and lasts for 3 years.

### Advantages:

- It's the most effective method of contraception
- It's very useful for women who find it difficult to remember to take a pill at the same time every day.
- The implant can be taken out if you have side effects.
- It doesn't interrupt sex
- It's safe to use while you're breastfeeding
- Your fertility will return to normal as soon as the implant is taken out

### Disadvantages:

- You may experience temporary side effects, like headaches and mood swings, but these normally settle.
- You'll need a small procedure to have it fitted and removed
- The implant usually causes a change in the menstrual bleeding pattern. This can be anything from having no periods at all to frequent or irregular bleeding.
- It doesn't protect you against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), so you may need to use additional contraception (such as condoms) as well

### Quirky fact:

The implant was first licensed in 1999, the implant has been used by more than 3 million women and it is probably the best contraceptive available.

### **What is it? The Injection**

The contraceptive injection releases the hormone progestogen (pronounced *pro-jest-o-jen*) into the woman's bloodstream to prevent pregnancy.

### **How does it work?**

- Depo-Provera is most commonly given in the UK and lasts for 12 weeks.
- It stops the woman releasing an egg each month.
- The woman needs to remember to have another injection before it stops working.



### **Advantages:**

- You can have the injection at any time during your menstrual cycle, as long as you're not pregnant or not at risk of pregnancy.
- It does not interrupt sex
- You do not have to take a pill every day
- It's safe to use while you're breastfeeding
- It's not affected by other medicines

### **Disadvantages:**

- It does not protect you against STIs
- There can be a delay of up to 1 year before your periods return to normal and you can become pregnant
- Some people may put on weight when they use contraceptive injections
- You may experience side effects like headaches, acne, and mood swings in the first few months.

### **Quirky fact:**

- By the end of the first year of use, most women have stopped their periods altogether.

**What is it?** The contraceptive patch is a small sticky patch that can prevent pregnancy.

**How does it work?**

- A sticky patch releases hormones into your body through your skin to prevent pregnancy.
- The hormones stop your ovaries releasing eggs.
- Each patch lasts for 1 week.
- You change the patch every week for 3 weeks, then have a week off without a patch.



**Advantages:**

- It's very easy to use and doesn't interrupt sex
- You don't have to think about it every day – you only have to remember to change it once a week
- It still works if you're sick (vomit) or have diarrhoea
- It can make your periods more regular, lighter and less painful
- It can help with premenstrual symptoms

**Disadvantages:**

- Other people might be able to see it.
- It can cause itchy or sore skin.
- It doesn't protect you against STIs, so you may need to use condoms as well
- Some women get mild side effects when they first start using the patch, such as headaches, sickness and mood changes – this usually settles down after a few months
- Some women bleed between their periods or have spotting (very light, irregular bleeding) when they first start using the patch.

**Quirky fact:**

The contraceptive patch, first produced in 2002, is very sticky and should stay on even in the shower, bath, hot tub, sauna or when swimming.



## What is it? The Pill

The combined oral contraceptive pill is often just called "the pill". It contains two artificial female hormones oestrogen and progesterone, which are produced naturally in the ovaries.

## How does it work?

- The Pill prevents the ovaries from releasing an egg each month (ovulation).
- The usual way to take the pill is to take 1 every day for 21 days, then stop for 7 days, and during this week you have a bleed like a period.
- You start taking the pill again after 7 days.
- Some pills can be taken continuously, without a break
- You need to take the pill at around the same time every day. You could get pregnant if you do not do this, or if you miss a pill, or vomit or have severe diarrhoea.



## Advantages:

- It does not interrupt sex and is very effective against pregnancy
- It usually makes your bleeds regular, lighter and less painful.
- It reduces your risk of cancer of the ovaries, womb, colon and non-cancerous breast disease.
- There is no evidence that the pill will make you gain weight.
- If you have heavy or painful periods, PMS (premenstrual syndrome) or endometriosis the combined pill may help.
- It can sometimes reduce acne, which is why some girls may take the pill but have no intention of having sex.

## Disadvantages:

- It can cause temporary side effects at first, such as headaches, nausea, breast tenderness and mood swings – it may help to change to a different pill
- Some medicines may make the pill less effective.
- Some bleeding or spotting is common in the first few months of using the pill
- The pill does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), so use a condom as well

## Quirky fact:

The pill was introduced into the UK on the NHS in 1961 and until 1967 was only prescribed to married women.