

How To Find The Best Birth Control For Your Body

A CHECKLIST OF THINGS TO CONSIDER BEFORE, DURING, AND AFTER CONSULTING YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER



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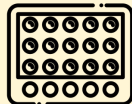
This guide is meant to help you organize your needs, wants, and questions about birth control so that you can have a focused conversation with your health care provider to find the best contraception for you and your lifestyle.

Before Making An Appointment, Consider...

DO I HAVE A UTERUS?



Whether or not you have a uterus influences the birth control options available for your body.



WHY AM I CONSIDERING USING BIRTH CONTROL?

Some people use hormonal birth control for reasons other than pregnancy prevention. Yes, some hormonal birth controls can do more than just prevent pregnancy (i.e. help with acne, ovarian cysts, PMS, etc)!

HOW OFTEN DO I HAVE SEX?



How often you have sex can influence what kind of contraception you choose, especially when considering behavior-based (for example: fertility awareness) or barrier (for example: condoms) methods of birth control.



WHAT MEDICATIONS AM I USING?

Some medications can influence the effectiveness of certain hormonal birth controls. For example, some (not all) antibiotics, anti-HIV, anti-fungal, anti-seizure, and herbal remedies can make some hormonal pills less effective.

DO I WANT TO HAVE CHILDREN IN THE FUTURE?



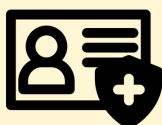
Your answer to this question will influence the kinds of birth control options available to you (such as permanent sterilizations like vasectomy or laparoscopy, or some hormonal options that may take time to return to fertility).



HOW MUCH MONEY AM I WILLING TO SPEND ON BIRTH CONTROL?

Different methods, and combinations of methods, may vary in cost to you. Note: There are often generic versions of brand name contraceptives that have the exact same active ingredients as the name brand, but are much more affordable. Ask your healthcare provider about generic equivalents!

DO I HAVE MEDICAL INSURANCE THAT I AM WILLING TO USE TO PURCHASE BIRTH CONTROL?



Medical insurance may help reduce the cost of birth control for you.



RESEARCHING METHODS OF CONTRACEPTION!

<https://www.bedsider.org/> is a great resource you can use to compare birth control options. Write down questions that you have about specific options. Rank which options you like best so that you can discuss those in more detail at your appointment.

During The Appointment, Confirm...

You can start the conversation by telling your health care provider that you would like to discuss some different methods of birth control to find the one that is best for you. Tell them the reason(s) why you are considering using birth control (whether to prevent pregnancy or not). If you have a uterus, let your health care provider know if you:

- Smoke cigarettes
- Have liver disease
- Have blood clots
- Have migraines
- Have a family history of blood clots
- Have a family history or personal history of depression
- Are taking any other medications/drugs
- Are taking any herbal products
- Are breastfeeding
- Have been pregnant recently
- Are taking any supplements/vitamins
- Have allergies

These things can influence the efficacy and side effects for certain birth controls, so it is important to let them know upfront if any of the above apply to you.

At this point, you can tell your health care provider that you have researched different birth control options, and that you have questions. **This is the time to ask all of your questions!** In addition to your own specific questions, make sure you understand the following about the options that you are considering:

- How do I use this birth control safely and effectively?
- How effective is this birth control? What is the failure rate?
- Would this method require my sexual partner to do anything?
- When can I expect this birth control to start being effective?
- How does this birth control work? For example: Is it a pill that releases hormones into the body? Is it something inserted into the uterus?
- What are the potential side effects of this birth control?
- Does this birth control protect against sexually transmitted diseases?
- Will this birth control affect sexual pleasure?
- What is the process/procedure to get this birth control?
- Is this birth control reversible?
- If I don't like this birth control, how long should I keep taking it until I try a different one?
- If this birth control is reversible, how soon can I (or my sexual partner) get pregnant after we stop using it?
- Do I need a prescription for this birth control, or can I buy it over the counter?
- How much will this birth control cost me?
- Does this method have hormones? If so, how do I know what amount(s) of hormones will work well for my body?

Once You Start Using Birth Control, Record...

My chosen birth control method:

Start Date:

Things **I like** about this method/positive effects:

Things **I don't like** about this method/negative effects:



Notes: Examples: Had breakthrough bleeding for the first two months. Had to wake up at 3am to take pill while on vacation overseas. Question: Where can I store my pill while hiking/camping in the desert (100F degree weather)?

For many people, finding the best birth control for their body and their lifestyle takes trial and error. If you don't like the birth control you are currently using, you can share what you don't like about it with your health care provider and try something else. There are a variety of different brands of most contraceptives. I wish you the best of luck!