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About contraception



A straightforward guide to contraception

What is contraception?

Contraception reduces the risk of pregnancy after sex

Just one sperm from semen released during sex can fertilise an egg to begin a pregnancy

Contraception is also called birth control or family planning

Most contraception is temporary and reversible

Most contraception does not protect people from sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

Different types of contraception to choose from

You have the right to choose and use contraception. Talk with your doctor or nurse about the best type to suit you. If you would like to, take a trusted person to the appointment like a friend, partner or family member to help you decide.

Type	About	STI protection?	How
Contraceptive pills - <i>The pill</i>	Different types of pills available Need to remember to take each day at the same time	No	Prescription from doctor Buy contraceptive pills from a pharmacy
Contraceptive implant	Long acting reversible contraception (LARC) Small plastic rod put under the skin of the arm by a doctor Can be left in the arm for up to 3 years	No	Appointment with doctor or nurse trained to insert
Intra uterine device - <i>IUD</i>	Long acting reversible contraception (LARC) Small device placed in the uterus Copper or hormone releasing IUD Stops sperm from reaching an egg Changes uterus lining to prevent fertilised egg attaching Lasts between 5-10 years depending on type Can be removed by a doctor or nurse	No	Appointment with doctor or nurse trained to insert
Female condoms	Plastic tube with a ring at each end Placed inside the vagina before sex	Yes, when used properly	Check availability and buy from pharmacies
Vaginal ring	Soft plastic ring that releases hormones like the pill Self-inserted into the vagina and remains there for 3 weeks, including during sex, then removed A new ring is inserted one week later for the next 4 week cycle	No	Prescription from doctor Buy up to 4 contraceptive rings from a pharmacy
Diaphragm	Soft plastic dome. Self-inserted into the vagina before sex Removed by user 6 or more hours after sex	No	Doctor or nurse to check the user for the right sized diaphragm
Contraceptive injection	Long acting hormone Given as an injection every 3 months May stop periods	No	Doctor or nurse to give injections
Emergency contraception	Tablet taken after sex when contraception is not used or not used properly Must be taken within 5 days after sex More effective when taken within 24 hours after sex Not suitable for on-going contraception	No	Buy from a pharmacy without a prescription Also available from your doctor, sexual health clinics, family planning centres and some hospitals

Contraception used by men and gender diverse people

Type	About	STI protection?	How
Male condoms	Fine latex or synthetic cover with lubrication Worn on an erect penis before sex Collects semen before entering the vagina Extra silicone lube can prevent tearing Protects against STIs when used properly	Yes, when used properly	Buy from supermarkets, vending machines and pharmacies Check condoms are within use by date

Contraception used by women, men and gender diverse people

Type	About	STI protection?	How
Sterilisation	Simple operation to make people unable to have children Usually permanent	No	Referral from your doctor to specialist or surgeon