

# Contraception: The options

Contraception is an important, normal part of life. When was the last time you thought about your options to ensure which method best fits your lifestyle?

Preparing for your doctor's appointment in advance is a good way to make sure you're involved in decisions about your contraception. After all, it's your body. Below and overleaf is a brief description of all the contraceptive methods available. Check out all the options below and then talk to your doctor about which might be the best one for you.

Contraception whenever the need arises!

## 1 Condoms

There are both male and female condoms available; both provide a barrier to sperm reaching the womb. Condoms are the only method which helps reduce the chance of sexually transmitted disease but have a low level of efficacy against pregnancy and so should be used with another contraceptive method.



## 2 Diaphragm or Cap

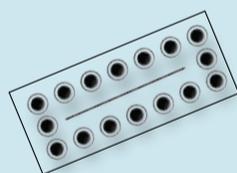
The diaphragm or cap is a circular dome made of rubber that is inserted to cover the cervix prior to intercourse. It must be used with a spermicide. The diaphragm must be left in place for 6 hours after intercourse.



## Everyday Contraception

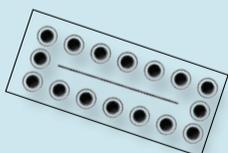
### 3 Combined Oral Contraceptive Pill (COCP)

The classic pill is called the combined pill by doctors because it contains small amounts of two hormones oestrogen and progesterone. This pill must be taken once a day.



### 4 Progesterone-only pill (POP)

The POP or "mini - pill" contains a very low dose of progesterone. Suitable for women who can not, or do not want to take oestrogen. This pill must be taken once a day.



## Weekly Contraception

### 5 Patch

The contraceptive patch releases both oestrogen and progesterone. The 4.5 x 4.5 cm patch is applied to clean and dry skin either on the abdomen, buttocks, upper arm or upper part of the body at weekly intervals for three weeks. There is then a patch free week where menstruation occurs. Useful for women who forget to take their pill daily.



Visit [www.talkoptions.ie](http://www.talkoptions.ie) and get tips on how to talk about contraception

Your contraceptive option is as individual as you are. Speak to your GP today about a contraceptive option that best suits your body and lifestyle. Visit [www.talkoptions.ie](http://www.talkoptions.ie) for more detailed information on the options described in this leaflet.



talk  
OPTIONS



## 6 Vaginal Ring

The vaginal ring is a small flexible plastic ring which releases oestrogen and progesterone. It is inserted by the woman into her vagina and left in place for three weeks. The ring is removed for a week and menstruation occurs. Useful for women who forget to take their pill daily.



## 7 Natural Family Planning

This method involves a couple becoming aware of the fertile days in a woman's cycle and avoiding intercourse at this time. It requires a good understanding of the menstrual cycle. Body temperature and changes in cervical mucus are recorded. This method requires careful observation and discipline on behalf of the couple.



# Long-term Contraception

## 8 Implant

The implant is another progesterone only option. It is approximately the size of a matchstick but looks like a soft rubber tube and is inserted under the skin in the upper arm. Insertion and removal are performed by trained healthcare professionals. Once inserted it provides contraception for up to 3 years. Useful for women who forget to take their pill daily.



## 9 Contraceptive Injection

An injectable contraceptive which contains progesterone. It's given as an injection every 3 months. Useful for women who forget to take their pill daily.



## 10 IUD and IUS

IUD stands for intrauterine device, a small plastic or copper contraceptive that is placed into the uterus (womb) by a doctor. It is often called the 'coil'. Once inserted this provides contraception for up to 10 years. The IUS (intrauterine system) is an IUD containing slow-release progesterone. Once inserted this provides contraception for up to 5 years. Useful for women who forget to take their pill daily.



## 11 Sterilisation

### Female Sterilisation

(Tubal ligation) involves clipping or cutting the Fallopian tubes. These tubes connect the ovary to the womb so this procedure prevents an egg from reaching the womb and being fertilised. This procedure is non-reversible and means that a woman would never be able to conceive in the future.

### Male Sterilisation

(Vasectomy) involves cutting the vas deferens. This is the tube that carries sperm from the testes to the penis. It can be done under local anesthetic and is a very safe and well tolerated procedure. Sperm continue to be produced but they are not present in semen and therefore cannot fertilise an egg. Male hormones and virility are not affected.



Find out more about contraceptive options and complete our on-line "What's right for me?" questionnaire on [www.talkoptions.ie](http://www.talkoptions.ie)

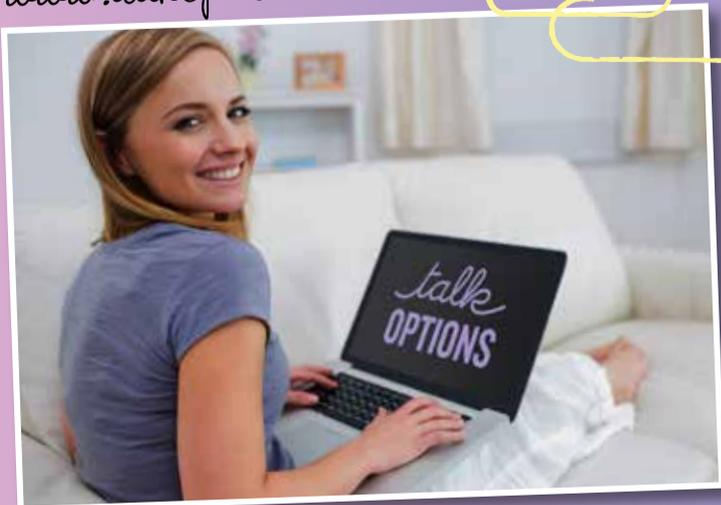
# Emergency Contraception

## 12 Emergency Contraception

Emergency Contraception (sometimes known as the morning after pill) is a single pill with a high dose of progesterone. It can be taken up to 72 hours after unprotected intercourse to reduce the chance of pregnancy. It is most effective in preventing pregnancy if taken in the first 24 hours.



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