



Care
Education
Advocacy

Contraceptive Options

Which one is best for me?



About us

Sexual Health Victoria is a state-wide independent, for-purpose, all-choice organisation that focuses on reproductive and sexual health care, education and advocacy. We embrace diversity and welcome everyone of all genders, sex, age, cultural background, sexual orientation, religion and ability.



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Our clinics opening hours

Mon – Fri 9am – 5pm
Sat & Sun Closed
Public Holidays Closed

After-hours

For urgent matters present to your local
Emergency Department or call 000.

shvic.org.au

Sexual Health Victoria wish to acknowledge the young women from the Greater Dandenong young mum's playgroup. In 2016 they identified the need to develop this contraceptive resource. Due to their enthusiastic and generous feedback at the time of its development, it has proven to be a great resource for the community and it continues to be reprinted and updated.

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Read this first ...

The contraceptive implant and IUD (Intra-Uterine Device) are much better at protecting against pregnancy than other reversible methods of contraception.

Most people don't get side-effects.

Some side-effects may settle with time.

A change in bleeding (periods) can be a side effect of all the methods containing hormones. Treatment options are available.

Fertility (ability to become pregnant) goes back to normal quickly after stopping the implant, IUD, ring or the contraceptive pill, no matter how long it has been used. The injection may take longer.

Only condoms protect against STIs (Sexually Transmissible Infections) as well as pregnancy.

The word '**effective**' means how well the method works to prevent pregnancy for a typical user.

**See your doctor, nurse or
Aboriginal health worker/
practitioner before deciding on
any method of contraception.
Some health conditions or
medications may make a method
unsuitable for some people.**



Contraceptive Implant



reversible



protects against pregnancy

99.95%

more than 99.95% effective



lasts up to **3 years**



does **NOT** protect against STI

A flexible rod that releases a hormone called progestogen. Inserted under the skin on the inside of the upper arm by a specially trained doctor or nurse.

Good to know...

- Protects against pregnancy very well.
- Long lasting. Don't have to remember to take something daily.
- Can be removed at any time and fertility returns quickly.
- Bleeding will change. It might be more often, at irregular (odd) times or not at all. It may make bleeding less painful.
- Safe if breastfeeding.



IUD (Intra-Uterine Device)

Copper or Hormonal Types



reversible



protects against pregnancy

99.5%
to
99.9%

more than 99.5% effective



lasts up to **5-10 years***



does **NOT** protect against STI

A small plastic T-shaped device with a nylon string at the end. Inserted into the uterus (womb) by a specially trained doctor or nurse.

*Lasts for 5 to 10 years, depending on the type of IUD

Good to know...

- Protects against pregnancy very well.
- Long lasting. Don't have to remember to take something daily.
- Can be removed at any time and fertility returns quickly.
- Hormonal IUD will make bleeding lighter, less painful or stop.
- Copper IUD may make bleeding heavier.
- Safe if breastfeeding.
- The Copper IUD can be used as emergency contraception. (see page 13)



Contraceptive Injection (Depo)



reversible



protects against pregnancy

96%

96% effective



injection **every 12 weeks**



does **NOT** protect against STI

An injection given every 12 weeks containing a hormone called progestogen.

Good to know...

- Protects against pregnancy very well if injections are given every 12 weeks.
- Long lasting. Don't have to remember to take something daily.
- Bleeding will change. It might be more often, at irregular (odd) times or not at all. It may make bleeding less painful.
- Safe if breastfeeding.



Combined Oral Contraceptive Pill

usually called 'The Pill'



reversible



protects
against
pregnancy

93%

93%
effective



taken
daily



does **NOT**
protect
against
STI

**'The Pill' contains 2
hormones called oestrogen
and progestogen. Need to
remember to take the pill
every day.**

Good to know...

- Most packs have 21 hormone pills and 7 sugar pills or 24 hormone pills and 4 sugar pills.
- If taken more than 24 hours late, vomit or have severe diarrhoea, it might not work.
- It can be used to skip bleeding.
- It may make bleeding regular, shorter, lighter and less painful.
- It might make your skin (acne) better.
- Safe if breastfeeding and baby is over 6 weeks old.



Vaginal Ring



reversible



protects against pregnancy

93%

93% effective



new ring inserted every 4 weeks*



does **NOT** protect against STI

A small, flexible ring that contains 2 hormones, oestrogen & progesterone. It sits inside the vagina for 3 weeks, releasing hormones into the body.

*The ring is inserted by the user into the vagina and left in place for three weeks. It is then removed and a new ring inserted one week later.

Good to know...

- Don't have to remember to take something daily.
- It might not work if taken out during the 3 weeks.
- It may make bleeding regular, shorter, lighter and less painful.
- It can be used to skip bleeding.
- It might make skin (acne) better.
- Safe if breastfeeding and baby is over 6 weeks old.



Progestogen only Pill

sometimes called the
Mini Pill



reversible



protects
against
pregnancy

93%

93%
effective



taken
daily



does **NOT**
protect
against
STI

The mini pill contains 1 hormone called progestogen. Need to remember to take the pill at the same time every day.

Good to know...

- There are two main types of progestogen only pill available.
- One type has 28 hormone pills and no sugar pills. This pill does not work if it is taken more than 3 hours late.
- The other type has 24 hormone pills and 4 sugar pills. This pill does not work if it is taken more than 24 hours late.
- The pill may not work if it was taken late or if vomiting or severe diarrhoea was experienced.
- It may make bleeding be more often, at irregular (odd) times or not at all.
- Safe if breastfeeding.



Condom

roll onto the penis



protects against pregnancy

88%

88% effective



single use only



protects against STI

A very thin but strong latex or non-latex covering. It is rolled over a stiff (erect) penis before any skin to skin genital contact or sex. The condom comes in various sizes; it is not a one size fits all.

Good to know...

- Protects against STIs and pregnancy if used correctly every time.
- Non latex condoms are available for people with allergies.
- Oil based lubricant (e.g. Vaseline or baby oil) can damage latex condoms and should not be used.
- Always check the expiry date.
- Condoms can be bought at supermarkets, pharmacies, petrol stations and vending machines.
- Free condoms are sometimes available through a local youth service or community health centre.
- Safe if breastfeeding.



Condom

insert into the vagina



protects
against
pregnancy

79%

79%
effective



single use
only



protects
against
STI

A very thin but strong non-latex pouch with a flexible ring at the end that is put inside the vagina.

Good to know...

- Protects against STIs and pregnancy if used correctly every time.
- Often needs to be bought online as not available at most shops.
- Need to practice putting it in the right way and making sure the penis goes inside the condom and not between the condom and vagina.
- Safe if breastfeeding.



Diaphragm



reversible



protects
against
pregnancy

82%

82%
effective



reusable



does **NOT**
protect
against
STI

A silicone cup shaped diaphragm is available at pharmacies. It fits inside the vagina and covers the cervix (entrance to the womb).

Good to know...

- It is used with Caya® diaphragm gel.
- Comes in one size and it fits most users.
- Leave in for minimum of 6 hours after last ejaculation.
- It can be purchased without a prescription. It is a good idea to see a doctor or nurse to check it fits and is covering the cervix.
- Safe to use if breastfeeding but cannot be used in first 6 weeks after giving birth.



Fertility Awareness Based Methods



reversible



protects against pregnancy

76% to 93%

76 - 93% effective



don't have intercourse on fertile days*



does **NOT** protect against STI

This uses the changes that happen in the body every month as a guide to know when it is safe or unsafe to have sex.

*Don't have intercourse (vaginal sex) or alternatively use another method of contraception on fertile days to protect yourself against pregnancy.

Good to know...

- Need to be aware of the changes that happen in the body every day.
- Need to be taught properly so you can track the changes and makes safe choices about protecting against pregnancy.
- It is hard to use if bleeding comes at odd times or if breastfeeding or close to starting menopause.
- Can use natural fertility awareness to help get pregnant.



Emergency Contraception (EC)

There are two types of EC, copper IUD and EC pill



emergency contraception



protects against pregnancy

85%

EC pill is 85% effective for each time it's used



don't delay*



does **NOT** protect against STI

A copper IUD or an EC pill can be used to help avoid getting pregnant if you have vaginal sex without contraception or the condom broke or slipped.

*Use EC as soon as possible, ideally within 24 hours of having vaginal sex, but it can still work within 120 hours (5 days).

Good to know...

- A copper IUD is a form of emergency contraception that protects best against pregnancy. It can also give long lasting protection against pregnancy if left in.
- The EC pill is sometimes known as the "morning after pill".
- The EC pill is not an abortion pill. If the EC pill doesn't work it is not known to harm the pregnancy.
- The EC pill can be bought from the pharmacy without a prescription.
- There are two types of EC pill available. Both types are considered safe to use if breastfeeding.



Permanent Contraception - Sterilisation



NOT
reversible



protects
against
pregnancy

99%

more than
99%
effective



permanent



does **NOT**
protect
against
STI

Vasectomy

Where the tubes that carry the sperm are cut under local or general anaesthetic.

Tubal Ligation

Where a clip is put on the fallopian tubes through a small cut in the tummy under general anaesthetic.

Good to know...

- Sterilisation protects against pregnancy very well and can't usually be reversed.
- Vasectomy and tubal ligation don't usually need an overnight stay in a hospital.
- Vasectomy takes at least 3 months to work.
- Tubal ligation starts working straight away.
- You might need to pay for sterilisation.



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