

CONTRACEPTION

LONG-ACTING REVERSIBLE CONTRACEPTIVES – “LARCS”

In 2014 the Academy of Pediatrics recommended that long-acting reversible contraceptives, which includes IUDs (intrauterine devices) and progestin implants, be the first line in preventing teen pregnancy. These devices have some of the lowest rates of failure compared to other forms of birth control. IUDs have failure rate of about 0.8% and implants 0.05% compared to 9% for birth control pills and 18% for condoms

IUDs – are small, T-shaped devices that are inserted into the uterus by a doctor and can prevent pregnancy for up to 10 years. They work by changing the cervical mucus and lining of the uterus. There were concerns about safety in the past but data on the current generation of IUDs shows that they do not cause pelvic inflammatory disease. There is a small risk of pelvic infection from IUD insertion (less than 1%), which only occurs within the first 3 weeks of insertion. IUDs do not cause infertility. When removed, return to fertility is rapid. Because of new information on safety along with excellent results in preventing pregnancy, the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology endorses IUDs as a first-line contraceptive for women of all ages. Insertion of an IUD, is an in-office procedure.

Risks of IUD placement include:

- Pain
- Insertion associated infection
- Uterine perforation
- Fainting
- Expulsion of the IUD

Side-effects:

- Copper IUD – increased menstrual bleeding, spotting and menstrual pain
- Levonorgestrel (hormone) containing IUDs – infrequent periods or no periods

Subdermal (under the skin) Implant – This is a 4 cm rod that is placed under the skin of the inner part of the upper arm. It releases a type of progestin that suppresses ovulation (egg release).

Risks – pain, infection and bleeding

Side-effects:

- Irregular bleeding – most common side-effect
- Headache
- Acne
- Weight gain

Condoms are still necessary with the above methods to protect against sexually transmitted infections.

BIRTH CONTROL PILLS

Combination oral contraceptives (birth control pills) contain two female hormones: estrogen and progesterone. Taking one of these pills every day prevents the normal release of an egg from the ovary each month. If an egg is not released, a woman cannot become pregnant.

Types of birth control pills

There are many types of combination birth control pills. Some types have pills for 21 days, some for 24 days, some for 28 days, and some for three months. There are also different versions and doses of hormones in different products. You must follow the directions exactly for taking the pill.

There are different ways to start birth control pills:

- Sunday start
 - Begin your first pack of pills by taking the first pill on the first Sunday after your menstrual period begins (even if you are still menstruating).
 - Continue taking one pill every day. When you have taken the last pill in the pack (on a Saturday), start a new pack the next day (Sunday). Do NOT skip any days between packs.
 - Your period should start during the last week of each pack of pills.
- Day 1 start
 - Begin your first pack on the first day of your period.
 - Continue taking one pill every day. When you have taken the last pill in the pack, start a new pack the next day. Do NOT skip any days between packs.
 - Your period should start during the last row of pills in each pack that you take.
- Quick start
 - Take your first pill on the day that you get your pack.
 - Continue taking one pill every day. When you have taken the last pill in the pack, start a new pack the next day. Do NOT skip any days between packs.

Important information about birth control pills

- Try to take your pill at the same time every day. This will help you remember to take the pills. It will also help keep hormone levels steady.
- Use a backup method of birth control (such as condoms and spermicide) until you have been taking the pill for 2 weeks.
- Your risk of pregnancy increases when you miss any pills.
 - If you forget one pill, take it as soon as you remember, even if it is the next day. Take the next pill on time.
 - If you miss two pills, take two pills daily for two days. Then take one pill a day. Use an additional method of contraception (condoms, spermicide) until your next period starts.
 - If you miss three or more pills in a row, stop taking your pills. Call the office that prescribed your pills for an appointment and use another method of birth control until you come in.

- **Use condoms, even though you are taking birth control pills, for protection against sexually transmitted disease until you have a long-term, single-partner relationship.**
- If you have bleeding between periods for several cycles you may need a different pill. Call the office that prescribed your pills for an appointment.
- Periods tend to be shorter and lighter while you are taking birth control pills.
- If you miss your period completely and have not missed any pills, continue taking your pills.
- If you have missed any pills or have missed two periods in a row, you may be pregnant. Do not start new pack until you have a pregnancy test.
- Any time you are seen for medical reasons, be sure to mention that you are taking birth control pills. This is particularly important if you are admitted to the hospital, having surgery, or if another medicine is prescribed for you.

Some advantages of birth control pills

Birth control pills are up to 99% effective in preventing pregnancy when taken correctly.

- The hormones in the pills may offer protection against fibrocystic breast disease, fibroadenomas of the breast, ovarian cysts, cancer of the uterus, and pelvic inflammatory disease (an infection of the female reproductive system).
- The pills are usually safe.
- Periods become regular and usually shorter and menstrual cramps may be less severe.
- This method of birth control remains effective during spontaneous sexual activity. That is, you do not have to plan to have condoms or spermicide on hand and remember to use them in order to prevent pregnancy. ***However, you must use a condom to prevent sexually transmitted diseases.***

Some disadvantages of birth control pills

- You must see a doctor to prescribe the pills.
- The hormones in the pills have some rare but potentially serious side effects. These side effects include high blood pressure, stroke, heart attack, blood clot, liver problems, and worsening of headaches.
- Women who smoke have an increased risk of side effects.
- Women with certain medical conditions such as cardiovascular disease, breast cancer, clotting problems, and liver disease cannot take the pill.
- A woman has to remember to take a pill every day and must carry pills with her when she is away from home.
- This method of birth control provides no protection against sexually transmitted diseases.
- The pills are one of the more expensive methods of birth control.

Call our office for an appointment or advice

Immediately about:

- Pain, swelling, and redness in the calf of one of your legs
- Shortness of breath, sharp chest pain, or coughing up blood
- Blurred vision or slurred speech
- Severe headaches

- Severe abdominal pain

Contraception

Page 3 of 8

During office hours about:

- Jaundice (yellow eyes and skin)
- Numbness or tingling
- Increasing headaches
- Severe mood changes

REMEMBER: BIRTH CONTROL PILLS DO NOT PROTECT AGAINST STDs OR AIDS. THE MALE PARTNER SHOULD WEAR A CONDOM EVEN IF THE FEMALE PARTNER IS TAKING BIRTH CONTROL PILLS!

Emergency Contraception like “Plan B”

Teens can avoid unintended pregnancy in several ways. Of course, the best way to avoid pregnancy is to wait to have sex. (See our handout *Abstinence: Why It’s Better to Wait*). Birth control is available to teens as hormones like pills or barriers like condoms with spermicide in case of a break or leak. Some teens, though, have unprotected sex and want to avoid unintended pregnancy. Emergency contraception, sometimes known as Plan B, can be used after sex to prevent pregnancy.

Key Facts about emergency contraception

- Plan B to reduce the chance of pregnancy after unprotected intercourse is most effective if used in the first 24 hours but can be used up to 120 hours (5days) later. It does not always work. The sooner after sex it is taken, the better the chances to avoid pregnancy.
- *Emergency contraception like Plan B is not as effective as regular use of birth control*
- Plan B is available over the counter, or contact Planned Parenthood (349 Rt 31 South, Building B, Suite 503, Flemington, NJ 08822 ~ 908.782.7727)
- The two most common brands are Plan B and Next Choice. Plan B One Step is the easiest to use. Facts about other types of emergency contraception are not included here.
- A pregnancy test must be done if there is no normal period with three weeks of emergency contraception use
- Emergency contraception works the same way as birth control pills – it prevents ovulation and hormone production by the ovary.
- Emergency contraception does not disrupt or damage an existing pregnancy
- Possible side effects include a heavier period, nausea or vomiting; no serious effects were found with repeated use
- Continue to use your regular birth control even if you used Plan B. If you have to use Plan B because you didn’t take your birth control pills on schedule, do not interrupt taking your pills. Keep on the same schedule. Continue to use your patch, ring, or shots if that is your usual method of birth control. Continue to use condoms.
- Girls who can’t take estrogen containing birth control pills may use Plan B
- *Emergency contraception does not protect against sexually transmitted infections, sometimes called STDs. Sexually active teens need testing for STDs.*

- Studies have shown that teens who have access to emergency contraception do not have more sex or use regular birth control less

Contraception

Page 4 of 8

- Up to 10% of sexually active teens are the victims of sexual assault. Teens may experience condom slippage or breakage, forget to take hormonal contraceptives on schedule, or have unprotected sex due to lack of planning or the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- By law, teens can confidentially ask pediatricians about contraception. We always recommend that teens and parents discuss how to make choices, but we also understand that this is not always possible.
- If you have more questions, please ask us! More information is available at <http://ec.princeton.edu>

DEPOPROVERA PATCHES and RINGS

These are forms of birth control that use hormones to stop the ovary from releasing an egg, just like the birth control pills. However, the hormones are not taken in pill form. Side effects are similar to the pill. These are prescribed by a gynecologist. You must use a condom to prevent AIDS with both of these methods.

DepoProvera is a hormone shot given every three months. Its main advantage is that you don't have to remember to take a pill every day. Its main disadvantages are you have to remember to get the shot every three months and some women have spotting between periods.

The patch is stuck to the skin and slowly releases hormones over a one-week period of time. A new patch is applied each week. The ring is inserted into the vagina and left in place for three to four weeks.

CONDOMS

A condom, also called a rubber, is a thin, disposable covering, usually made of strong rubber or latex, which fits snugly over an erect penis. It acts as a barrier that stops sperm from entering the vagina. Condoms are used to protect both partners from sexually transmitted diseases (including AIDS) and to prevent pregnancy.

Instructions for using condoms

- **USE ONLY LATEX CONDOMS.** Condoms made of natural skin may allow some viruses to pass through (such as AIDS virus or hepatitis virus).
- Open the package at one end to avoid tearing the condom. Push it out by squeezing the bottom of the package so your fingernail will not rip the condom. Unroll a fresh condom over the erect penis before any sexual contact.
- Lubricants can be used to make the condom more slippery during sex. Lubricants are applied to the condom after it is rolled onto the penis. Use only water-based lubricants like KY Jelly. Oil based lubricants like Vaseline, baby oil, or Crisco can melt latex rubber so don't use them. It may be easier to buy lubricated condoms.
- Leave the small end (reservoir) loose at the tip of the condom. At the time of ejaculation, the semen that comes out of the penis is caught in the end of the condom. This stops the semen from going into the vagina.

- Remove the penis from the vagina soon after ejaculation. The condom could easily slip off as the erection lessens. If the condom slips off, sperm or viruses

Contraception

Page 5 of 8

- might escape into the vagina. Before the penis is pulled out of the vagina, hold the rim of the condom firmly to prevent the condom from coming off in the vagina and spilling semen.
- Use a new condom each time you have sexual contact. This is very important. Keeping condoms in a wallet for more than a month is not a good idea because warm damp surroundings can damage the latex rubber. Old condoms break more easily so check the expiration date.

Advantages of condoms:

- Condoms are 90% reliable in preventing pregnancy. When used with a vaginal spermicide (cream, foam, or gel placed in the vagina to kill sperm that may escape from the condom), their effectiveness increases to 95%. Spermicidal condoms are available; these have the spermicide included with the condom.
- Condoms are the best contraceptive available that also helps prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.
- Condoms are widely available to anyone. They can be bought without a prescription at your local drug or grocery store.

Disadvantages of condoms

- A condom must be put on the penis **BEFORE** any genital contact. If both you and your partner are not able to exercise this willpower **EVERY** time, this is not a good form of birth control for you. Even if you forget just one time, you could get pregnant. Remember condoms are your only protection against infection including AIDS except for abstinence (not having sex).

Male responsibility for birth control

- Condoms are the only contraceptive that allows the male partner responsibility for birth control instead of the female partner.
- Never assume your partner is using some form of birth control; if you don't know, ask her. If she isn't using birth control, use a condom. Even if she is using birth control, condoms are the only method that provides good protection against infections. Use a condom to protect against disease even if your partner is using another method of birth control.

The best relationships are based on good communication. If you and your partner haven't spoken seriously yet about your relationship, now is the perfect time to start. Making babies is easy, but raising them is one of life's most difficult challenges. Think about it.

DIAPHRAGMS

The diaphragm is a dome-shaped rubber cup with a flexible rim. Before intercourse the diaphragm is filled with a contraceptive cream or jelly and inserted into the vagina. (The contraceptive cream or jelly contains a spermicide, a chemical that kills sperm). The diaphragm covers the cervix (the opening into the uterus) and, together with the

spermicide, provides a barrier that prevents live sperm from reaching the uterus, thus preventing pregnancy.

Contraception

Page 6 of 8

Instructions for using a diaphragm

- Insert the diaphragm no more than 2 hours before intercourse.
- Before you insert the diaphragm, urinate and wash your hands.
- Squeeze 1 to 2 teaspoons of contraceptive cream or jelly into the dome of the diaphragm.
- Rub a small amount of the contraceptive cream or jelly around the inside and outside of the entire diaphragm rim with your fingertip.
- Get into a comfortable position. At first, the easiest position may be lying on your back with your knees up. If you stoop to insert the diaphragm, keep your heels on the floor and your knees wide apart. To insert it while you're standing, prop one leg up on a stool and keep the other knee slightly bend.
- Fold the diaphragm in half by pressing the opposite sides together with the thumb and fingers of one hand. Hold the diaphragm with the dome hanging below the rim to keep the contraceptive cream or jelly in.
- Hold the lips of your vagina open with your other hand. Gently slide the folded diaphragm into your vagina, placing your index finger on the rim to guide it. Aim toward the small of your back, as if you were inserting a tampon. You may feel the rim of the diaphragm pass over the cervix. Use your index finger to push the front rim up behind the pubic bone.
- Make sure that the diaphragm is in place. Insert your index finger into your vagina and touch the dome. You should feel the cervix underneath. You may also feel folds in the surface of the dome. Move your index finger to the front rim of the diaphragm and make sure it is firmly in place behind the pubic bone. The back rim must be behind the cervix.

Removing and cleaning the diaphragm

- After intercourse, leave the diaphragm in place and do not douche for at least 6 to 8 hours.
- If you have intercourse more than once within a 6-hour period, you should insert more contraceptive cream or jelly each time you have intercourse. Do not remove the diaphragm to do this. A plastic applicator is sold with the contraceptive cream or jelly. Use this applicator to insert more jelly or cream into your vagina, in front of the diaphragm.
- To remove the diaphragm, put your index finger in your vagina and hook it under the rim of the diaphragm. Gently pull the diaphragm down and out.
- Wash your diaphragm every time after intercourse with plain mild soap and water. Dry it with a towel and put in its case. Store the diaphragm in its case away from heat.

Decreasing the risk of infection

- Wash your hands carefully before you insert or remove the diaphragm.
- Do not wear the diaphragm more than 24 hours at a time.
- Do not use your diaphragm during your period or when you are having abnormal vaginal discharge. Have your partner use condoms during this time instead.
- Do not use a diaphragm for the first 3 months after childbirth.

Refitting a diaphragm

Return to the gynecologist to have your diaphragm fitting checked if you:

- Gain or lose 10-20 pounds.
- Experience pain or discomfort from your diaphragm.
- Have been pregnant since your last fitting.
- Have had any kind of pelvic surgery.

Advantages of the diaphragm

- This method of birth control is 80% to 90% reliable in preventing pregnancy.
- Diaphragms help prevent the spread of sexually transmitted diseases.
- There are practically no side effects from the use of the diaphragm and spermicide. This is a very safe method of birth control.
- Diaphragms provide immediate protection against pregnancy. There is no delay like with starting the pill.
- Diaphragms may be inserted with spermicide up to 2 hours before intercourse.

Disadvantages of the diaphragm

- The diaphragm and spermicide must be inserted BEFORE any genital contact. If both you and your partner are not able to exercise this willpower EVERY time, this is not a good form of birth control for you. Even if you forget just one time, you could get pregnant.
- Diaphragms are usually not the best choice for birth control for teenagers because they can be difficult to use correctly.
- Diaphragms must be fitted by a gynecologist.

Call the office where the diaphragm was fitted if:

- You have unusual vaginal discharge.
- You have abdominal pain or unexplained fever.
- You have missed your period.
- You have questions.

VAGINAL SPERMICIDES:

Vaginal spermicides are a chemical method of birth control used in the vagina. There are many forms of spermicides: creams, gels, inserts, foams, and sponges. Spermicides prevent pregnancy by killing sperm before they reach the uterus.

Instructions for using spermicides

The instructions for using each type of spermicide are different. Make sure that you follow the directions on the spermicide package carefully. Below are some general guidelines for using spermicides to prevent pregnancy. Call us if you have any questions.

- Put the spermicide in the vagina before you have any sexual contact.
- Insert the applicator or suppository deep into the vagina like you would a tampon. Suppositories require waiting 15 minutes before sexual contact so they can melt (follow package directions).

- If the spermicide has been in the vagina more than a half-hour before ejaculation (release of sperm) insert more spermicide. Spermicides are effective only if you use fresh applications before each ejaculation. You must repeat application before you repeat sex. This is very important.
- Douching may decrease the effectiveness of the spermicide and is not recommended. If you feel you need to douche, do not douche until at least 8 hours after you have had sex.

Advantages of spermicides

- Spermicides are only 80% reliable in preventing pregnancy. However, when used with a condom, their effectiveness increases to 95%.
- They are a relatively inexpensive form of birth control.
- They are widely available to anyone. They can be bought without a prescription at your local drug or grocery store.
- Vaginal spermicides and condoms used together are the best spontaneous form of birth control available.

Disadvantages of spermicides

- If you can't remember to use vaginal spermicides EVERY time you have sex, this is not an effective form of birth control for you. Even if you forget one time, you could get pregnant.
- Allergic reactions (such as itching and rash) are a possible side effect of vaginal spermicides. Stop using them if you develop allergic symptoms and contact your physician.

CALL OUR OFFICE IF

- You have questions or concerns

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