

Choosing a Method

- If you don't want to get pregnant, make sure that you protect yourself. Your family planning clinic or doctor can help you decide which birth control method is best for you.
- Use your birth control method the right way every time you have sex to prevent pregnancy.
- Try one of the many other birth control methods if you don't like the method you are using.
- It is important to choose a method that you feel comfortable using every time.
- This leaflet does not include all birth control methods. Ask your birth control provider about other methods.
- The effectiveness of each method depends on how well the couple uses it.
- Using condoms along with another method such as the pill can provide protection against both STDs/HIV and pregnancy.
- Whatever method you choose, latex condoms are the best protection against STDs & HIV.

Seeing a Doctor or Nurse

A short description of birth control methods is included in this brochure. Those marked with an asterisk (*) require a visit to a doctor, nurse or family planning clinic. Although you do not need to see a doctor or nurse to get the others, they can discuss your options and teach you how to use the method in the right way. Family planning clinics may give condoms at little or no cost.

Finding Birth Control

Many clinics and private providers offer a full range of family planning and reproductive health services at no cost to clients through Family PACT. Call the **Family PACT Information and Referral Service at (800) 942-1054 to find out if you are eligible**. The service also lists the services that are available and the names and addresses of the five (5) providers closest to you. Information is available in English, Spanish, Hmong, Mandarin and Vietnamese.

Planned Parenthood Los Angeles clinics provide free or low-cost health care. Find out more at **(800) 576-5544** or www.pplosangeles.org

Emergency Contraception (EC)

If you had sex without using a birth control method or your method failed, you can take EC pills within 72 –120 hours to prevent pregnancy. The earlier you take the pills, the more effective they are likely to be.

EC can be obtained from clinics, private providers and some pharmacies. For advice and help obtaining EC, call the **California EC Hotline at (800) 521-5211**.



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

Public Health

LA COUNTY STD PROGRAM, FORM B515

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It's
Your
Choice!

You can decide
if and when you want to
have a baby.

Hormonal Methods

These methods are over 99% effective if they are used in the right way.

Birth Control Pills* work

very well for women who

can remember to take a pill every day.

Progesterone-only pills are useful if you are breast feeding or cannot take estrogen.



A **Birth Control Patch*** is a thin stick-on square, like a band-aid, that has hormones to prevent pregnancy. The patch is easy to use; it is just placed on the woman's skin. A new patch is used once a week for 3 weeks, and the 4th week is patch-free.



A **Vaginal Ring*** is a small flexible ring that has hormones to prevent pregnancy. The ring is easy to use. Women place a new ring in the vagina every month. Each new ring is worn for 3 weeks with a 1 week break.

Depo-Provera* is a hormone

shot that prevents pregnancy

for 3 months. The shot is excellent at keeping women from getting pregnant. It is a good method for people who have a hard time remembering to use other methods.



The **Intrauterine System* (IUS)** is a device that releases a low level of hormones and works for 5 years. When a woman uses an IUS, periods can be lighter, shorter or absent.

Barrier Methods

These methods are less effective, but you only need to use them when you have sex. To work, they have to be used correctly every single time.

Male Condoms are put on the

penis to keep semen from getting into the vagina. They are

97% effective against pregnancy if used correctly every time. Latex and plastic condoms also protect from most STDs & HIV.



Female Condoms are soft plastic pouches

with a soft flexible ring at each end. The ring in the closed end is placed in the vagina. The other ring at the open end stays outside

the woman's body. Female condoms are 95% effective against pregnancy if used the right way every time. This condom also protects you from most STDs & HIV.



A **Diaphragm*** is a round

rubber cap that covers a woman's cervix. It is placed

in the vagina before having sex and left in place for 6 hours after sex. The diaphragm is 94% effective if used correctly every time.



Abstinence means not having vaginal, oral or anal intercourse. It is 100% effective at preventing pregnancy. There are many ways to be close to your partner with no risk of getting pregnant. Remember, it's OK to say "not now" to sex.

Other Methods

An **Intrauterine Device (IUD)*** is a small piece of plastic with a short string which is placed into a woman's uterus. The IUD prevents pregnancy for up to ten years. It is highly effective.



Sterilization* is a permanent operation for women and men who do not want children. It is highly effective.

How well do these work?

The pregnancy rates given in this brochure only apply to women who use the method perfectly, every time.

99% effective means that if 100 women at risk of pregnancy use the method for a year, 1 will become pregnant.

Note that if 100 women use no birth control, 90 will become pregnant in a year.

Remember. . .

Only condoms protect against STDs and HIV. Using BOTH a condom AND an effective birth control method gives excellent protection against STDs, HIV, AND pregnancy.