

Different Methods

A condom when used properly is a fairly reliable form of contraception. It can be 98 percent effective if one is used every time you have sexual intercourse. The added advantage of using a condom is not only can it stop pregnancy, it can also protect against sexually transmitted diseases. Young people often ask how to put one on. It is pulled over the head of an erect penis with the bubble pointing out and rolled down the shaft. There are usually diagrams on the packet to help you. Condoms for females are also available.

Males are strongly encouraged to participate in contraception. The following methods are used by females:

The contraceptive pill when taken regularly is a way of chemically interfering with the natural menstrual cycle. It prevents you from ovulating. Pregnancy can only occur when you ovulate and sperm contacts the ovum (egg).

The Pill is 98% effective and a convenient form of contraception for a female who is sexually active and doesn't choose to use natural methods. The Pill interferes with the natural functions of the body. There are potential side effects that have been well researched. Find out about these so that informed choices can be made.

Taking the Pill alters your experience of the emotional ebb and flow of your monthly cycle. It reduces your connection to your body, cycle and your fertility. Other methods of contraception require more education, care and active involvement.

If you see a doctor, it is more likely that the Pill is recommended rather than any of the natural methods. It is not the only choice available. Some doctors may prescribe the Pill for you if you are having an irregular cycle or menstrual discomfort. This does not deal with the cause of these symptoms.

Note: If natural methods of contraception are not suitable at this time in your life it is better to use the Pill than risk unplanned pregnancy.

A diaphragm or cervical cap used with spermicidal gel can be 95-98 percent effective when used properly. The gel kills live sperm cells. A diaphragm or cap is a device that is inserted into the vagina. It covers the cervix to stop sperm from entering the womb. When used with spermicidal gel it is a harmless and effective method of contraception. Family Planning Clinics, doctors or Women's Health Centres can measure, fit and teach you how to use it. If it is not inserted properly it is not an effective method of contraception.

Fertility awareness if used properly is a natural method of contraception where mucus flow and menstrual cycle are taken into account. This can be 95-99 percent effective. You can get specially designed calendars to help keep accurate records. After some months of recording your cycle and checking your mucus (vaginal fluids) you can become familiar with your fertility pattern. It takes

practice. You can back it up by using other methods of contraception, like condoms or a diaphragm, at the time of the month when you can become pregnant. Get professional advice if you intend to use this method.

You can use a thermometer. By recording your basal body temperature daily you can know the precise timing of your ovulation. Knowing this assists you in using other contraceptive protection and deciding not to include sexual intercourse in your lovemaking.

Lady Free Biotester is the name given in Australia for a new device that helps you to determine the time of ovulation. It has a mini-microscope and is a bit bigger than a lipstick. It magnifies the crystals in saliva and when a fern-like pattern shows, you are about to ovulate. It's very simple. It is not a method of contraception but tells you even before your mucus indicates whether you are becoming fertile. It is obtainable at Pharmacies.

If you choose to use fertility awareness, seek professional help. Natural Fertility Management and Family Planning Clinics can teach you about this method. These clinics may also give you a Lunar Cycle chart.

Be conscious about your fertility. You can do this by keeping accurate records of the date you begin to menstruate. Over the months it becomes easy to recognise when you are ovulating, when you could become pregnant and when you may bleed. Sperm can live for up to five days in the vagina. If you make love anytime during the five days before ovulation and five days after, you can become pregnant. During this time you can take extra care by not having sexual intercourse or by using a safe method of contraception.

Most methods of contraception have a 95-99 percent success rate but when not used properly they can result in a high failure rate. When we become conscious of our fertility there could be less unplanned pregnancies, abortions and babies in the world.

A Note: With the arrival of the Pill in the 60's, it became fashionable to be sexual with many partners. This is called promiscuity. There has been an increase in sexually transmitted diseases because of unconscious sexual contact and a weakening of the immune system. Take care of yourself sexually!

Whoops!

If you don't use contraception or a condom breaks or slips off the penis, there is a pill that you can take the next morning if you think you might be ovulating and may become pregnant. It can have side effects – headaches and vomiting. You can get this from a doctor, Women's Health Centres or Family Planning Clinics. **The Morning After Pill is for emergencies only** and is not to be used as a regular method of contraception.