



Contraception

Contraception (also known as birth control) is a broad term used for medical and non-medical prevention of pregnancy. Although medical contraceptives are primarily used for birth control, their hormonal content means that they are often used to manage other medical conditions such as menorrhagia. Some barrier contraceptive devices, specifically condoms, are used not just for birth control but also to reduce the risk of contracting sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Some examples of different types of contraception are below.

Hormonal contraceptives

- Combined oral contraceptive pill (OCP) – known as the “combined” OCP because it contains both oestrogen and progesterone
- “Mini pill” – similar to the combined OCP but without oestrogen, the mini pill contains progesterone only
- Implanon – this is inserted under the skin in the upper arm and releases the hormone progesterone
- Hormonal intrauterine device (IUD) or intrauterine system (IUS) – this is inserted into the vagina and can remain there for several years, releasing hormones directly into the uterus.
- Cooper IUD – not specifically hormonal, the copper content of the IUD makes the uterus hostile to conception

Barrier contraceptives

- Condoms (male and female)
- Spermicide
- Diaphragm
- Cervical cap

Permanent sterilisation

Permanent sterilisation techniques exist for males and females. This is an option to discuss with your doctor only if you have decided not to have children in the future.

- Vasectomy – for males, this involves surgical blockage of the vas deferens
- Tubal ligation – for females, this involves the surgical blockage of the fallopian tubes