

Contraception refers to the methods used to prevent pregnancy.

Some methods of contraception, like condoms and internal condoms, can also be used to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs).



IMPORTANT!

'Pulling out' is not a method of contraception. It's hard to get right every time and pre-cum can contain sperm which can lead to pregnancy.

IMPORTANT!

Fertility awareness methods (including apps that help you track your cycle) are not always accurate and are not suited to many people due to age and lifestyle. These methods are only advisable if you would be okay with getting pregnant if it happened.



WHERE CAN YOU GET IT?



Contraception is available for free from:

- Brook services
- Contraception clinics
- Sexual health or GUM (genitourinary medicine) clinics
- Some GP surgeries
- Some young people's services
- Some pharmacies

It is also possible to buy contraceptive pills and condoms from pharmacies and online.

Our Find a Service tool will help you find your nearest service: brook.org.uk/find-a-service



DID YOU KNOW?

LARC (long acting reversible contraception) methods are the most effective at preventing pregnancy.

LARC methods: implant, injection, hormonal coil and non-hormonal coil.



EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION



If you've had sex without contraception or your method failed (like if the condom broke or you missed a pill), you may be able to prevent an unplanned pregnancy by using emergency contraception within five days.

There are two types:

Emergency contraceptive pill (aka the 'morning after pill'): available from a range of services and some pharmacies

Copper coil (Cu-IUD): fitted by a doctor or nurse. The copper coil is also a method of regular contraception.

Visit brook.org.uk/emergency-contraception for more information.



DID YOU KNOW?

You can get contraception for free, even if you're under 16.

FREE!

CONTRACEPTION

You might have to try a few different methods to find one that suits you and your lifestyle.

You may also want to consider changing your method as your needs and body change throughout your life.

To explore which methods might be best suited to you visit brook.org.uk/best-contraception-for-me

	Barrier methods: stop sexual fluids being transferred between partners (and some protect against STIs, too!).			Hormonal methods: synthetic versions of the hormones oestrogen and/or progesterone disrupt the process that leads to pregnancy. Some hormonal methods can help if you have heavy or painful periods, or if you struggle with acne.							Other methods		
	External condoms	Internal condoms	Diaphragms and caps	Combined pill	Progestogen-only pill (mini pill or POP)	Contraceptive implant	Contraceptive injection	Contraceptive patch	Contraceptive vaginal ring	Hormonal coil (LNG-IUD or Mirena)	Non-hormonal coil (copper coil or Cu-IUD)	Fertility awareness methods	Sterilisation
Effectiveness (without mistakes)	98%	95%	92-99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	99%	75-99%	99%
Also protects against STIs	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
May help with heavy periods	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Lasts for months or years	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓
Widely available	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓	✗
Hormone free	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Can control when your period is	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗
Can improve skin appearance	✗	✗	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗

TALK ABOUT IT

Although most methods are for use by people with vaginas, contraception is everyone's responsibility and it's important to discuss it with your sexual partners.

If you have a penis, you can always choose to use a condom. And if your partner asks you to use one then you should.