

## Emergency Contraception:

If a woman has sex without any type of birth control or if she thinks her method has failed she may want to use emergency contraception. In this method, certain doses of hormones are taken in pill form within 72 hours after sex without birth control. They work by preventing pregnancy and are different from having an abortion. This emergency contraception is commonly known as "Plan B".

You can obtain emergency contraception from your doctor, a family planning clinic, some pharmacies, or a hospital emergency room. It is extremely important that you talk to your doctor right away if you think you might need this protection. If you use emergency contraception within 72 hours of unprotected sex, your chance of getting pregnant is greatly reduced. The sooner you take Plan B after sex, the more effective it is. Many women experience some nausea and cramping with Plan B.

## Resources

### *Seattle*

Planned Parenthood of Western WA  
[www.ppww.org/](http://www.ppww.org/)  
(206) 328-7711 / 1-888-30SXASK  
**Seattle Clinic**  
2001 E. Madison St.  
Seattle, WA 98122  
(206) 328-7700

Harborview International Clinic  
206-731-4192

### *Online*

[http://www.acog.org/publications/patient\\_education/bp005.cfm](http://www.acog.org/publications/patient_education/bp005.cfm)

[www.metrokc.gov/health/](http://www.metrokc.gov/health/)

[www.sexualhealth.com/](http://www.sexualhealth.com/)

<http://www.healthywomen.org/>

### Al-Shifa Clinic

Email: [alshifa@u.washington.edu](mailto:alshifa@u.washington.edu)  
Website: <http://students.washington.edu/alshifa>

# Contraception

*Delaying Pregnancy until  
you're ready.*



## What are Contraceptives?

Contraceptives are medications, devices, etc that are used in order to prevent a woman from becoming pregnant. It is important to remember that contraceptives are not 100% effective. There are many different types of contraceptives, each having their own benefits and risks. You and your health practitioner should discuss which type of contraceptive is best for you and your partner.

It is necessary to remember that while hormonal contraceptives prevent pregnancy, they **do not prevent sexually transmitted diseases, or STDs.**

### *Hormonal Contraception*

With hormonal birth control, a woman takes hormones similar to those her body makes naturally. These hormones prevent ovulation; there is no egg present so pregnancy does not occur. Hormonal pills, injections, rings, and patches are all over 98% effective and are considered very safe for most women

**-Birth Control Pills:** One of the most popular methods of hormonal birth control is the birth control pill, as known as an oral contraceptive. These must be taken **every day** to effectively suppress hormones and prevent pregnancy. Most birth control pills contain the hormones estrogen and progestin, however some pills contain only progestin. These pills are safe, but they are not recommended if you smoke and are over the age of 35.

### *Hormonal methods continued*

**-Vaginal Ring:** The vaginal ring is a flexible, plastic ring that is placed in the upper vagina where it cannot be felt. Its name brand is the "NuvaRing." The ring releases both estrogen and progestin continuously to prevent pregnancy. It is worn for 21 days, removed for 7 days, and then a new ring is inserted. During the week it is out, you have your normal bleeding.

**-Skin Patch:** The contraceptive skin patch is a small adhesive patch that is worn on the skin to prevent pregnancy. It is a weekly method of hormonal birth control. The patch contains both estrogen and progestin and releases these hormones through the skin. A patch is worn for 1 week and then replaced with a new one on the same day of the week for 3 weeks in a row. During the fourth week, a patch is not worn, withdrawal bleed occurs.

**-Injections:** One type of hormonal birth control, known as "Depo-Provera" is a shot that provides protection against pregnancy for 3 months. This means a woman needs only four injections each year, which must be administered by a health professional. During the time that the injection is effective and you do not need to take any other measures in order to prevent pregnancy. Another type of injection is given every month and contains estrogen as well as a progestin.

### *Barrier Methods*

Barrier methods physically block sperm from reaching a woman's cervix. They are inserted before sex, and removed afterwards.

**-Spermicides** are chemicals that kill sperm. They are placed in the vagina close to the cervix. They include tablets, foam, cream, jelly, and film (thin sheets). You can purchase these at drug stores.

**-The male condom** is a thin sheath made of latex (rubber), polyurethane (plastic), or animal membrane. It is worn by the man over his erect penis during intercourse. You can purchase these at drug stores.

\*condoms are effective in reducing STD transmission

**-The female condom** is a thin plastic pouch that lines the vagina. It is held in place by a closed inner ring at the cervix and an outer ring at the opening of the vagina. It can also be placed in the anus before anal sex. These can also be found at drug stores, but cost more than male condoms.

**-The diaphragm** is a small, round rubber dome that fits inside the woman's vagina and covers her cervix. You must be individually fitted for one at a clinic.



**-The cervical cap** is similar to a diaphragm but smaller, a thin rubber or plastic dome shaped like a thimble. It fits tightly over the cervix and stays in place by suction. These also require professional fitting at a clinic.