When you’re a young adult your choices for a birth control method might be different than that of a woman who is older or who is married. We think it’s important for you to know about birth control methods available today, even if you are not yet sexually active.

Contraception is a very important key to your sexual health and state of well being. Did you know that 25% of women who have intercourse without using a method of birth control will become pregnant within one month and 85% will become pregnant within one year.

Choosing a birth control method is a very personal decision, but one you might want to discuss with your sexual partner. To choose which birth control method to use, consider how well each one will work for you:
  - How effective is it?  
  - How will it fit into your lifestyle?  
  - How safe is it?  
  - Is it affordable?  
  - Does it protect you from sexually transmitted diseases?

These are important questions that are worth taking some time to think about. Talk to your sexual partner or parent if you can. We hope that many of you can discuss these options with someone.

Just a reminder or if you don't already know... you can get a prescription for birth control without parental consent in the United States. You can also see a health care provider without anyone else knowing also. It’s your body and your
privacy.

Methods Of Birth Control

**Abstinence**

Condoms (male & female)

Contraceptive creams, foams, jelly & suppositories - see Spermicides

**Spermicides**

Contraceptive Sponge

Depo-Provera (Hormonal Injections) & Lunelle - A monthly hormonal injection.

**Diaphragm**

**The Pill**

**Spermicides**

**Emergency Contraception**

Methods Not Usually Recommended For Teenagers (but we think you should know about them).

The IUD (Intrauterine Device) - a small plastic device inserted into the uterus that is often covered with copper. Some IUDs come in different shapes or contain hormones. The IUD rests inside the uterus. For more on the Mirena IUD, see that page, if you are an adult...

**Effectiveness**

97.4% - 99.2%. Not effective against sexually transmitted infections.

**Reason not recommended for teens**

Unless she has had a child, a young woman's uterus may be too small to hold an IUD.
IUD users who get certain sexually transmitted infections can develop pelvic inflammatory disease and become unable to have children. Teenagers are at very high risk for these infections. One out of four teenagers has at least one of these infections.

**Norplant System** - a reversible, five year, low dose, progestin-only contraceptive. **This product was taken off the market in the United States in July 2002**, but we think you should know about it in case you or someone you know has it still.

**Effectiveness**
Average annual pregnancy rate over five years is less than 1%. Not effective against sexually transmitted infections.

**Reason not recommended for teens**
No protection from STDs. Scar tissue forms around the implants in arms that are not yet fully grown. The hormonal injection, Depo-Provera has replaced this method in most areas of the U.S. & Canada. An incision is made in the skin of the inside of the mid-arm & can be very painful. The removal from teens in studies has shown to be difficult.

**The Rhythm Method** - Periodic Abstinence or Fertility Awareness Methods (FAMs) - a professional teaches a woman how to chart her menstrual cycle and to detect certain physical signs that help her predict "unsafe" days. She must abstain from intercourse (periodic abstinence) or use condoms (FAMs) during nine or more "unsafe" days. Includes:
checking temperature daily
checking cervical mucus daily
recording menstrual cycles on calendar

**Effectiveness**
75% - 99%. Not effective against sexually transmitted infections.

**Reason not recommended for teens**
These methods work best for women with very regular periods.

Teen women often have irregular periods.

Their partners may not wish to cooperate in using this method.

A teen's relationship may not be as stable or as committed as is necessary for developing the trust and cooperation necessary for effective use of this method.

Sterilization - an operation to keep sperm from joining egg
tubal ligation - intended to permanently block a woman's tubes where sperm join the eggs

vasectomy - intended to permanently block a man's tubes that carry sperm

**Effectiveness**
98% - 99.4%. Not effective against sexually transmitted infections.
**Reason not recommended for teens**
Sterilization is intended to be permanent. It is not appropriate for anyone who may want to have a child in the future. Because people so often change their minds about having families, sterilization is usually discouraged for people under 30 who have not had children.

Withdrawal - the man pulls his penis out of the vagina before he "comes" to keep sperm from joining egg. This can hardly even be called a method of contraception.

**Effectiveness**
81% - 96%. Not effective against sexually transmitted infections.

**Reason not recommended for teens**
Some men lack the experience and self-control to pull out in time.

Some men have been known to say they will pull out, and then they get so excited and carried away that they don't.

Some men cannot tell when they are going to ejaculate.

Some men ejaculate very quickly, before they realize it.

Before ejaculation, almost all men leak fluid that can cause pregnancy.

**Emergency Contraception**

If you have unprotected vaginal intercourse, you may need
**Emergency Contraception**; also called Plan B® can help prevent conception after unprotected vaginal intercourse, or if you are raped. Is available over-the-counter in the United States if you are age 18 or older. Women under the age of 18 cannot purchase the pills without a doctor's prescription. Is provided in two ways: emergency hormonal contraception -- two increased doses of certain birth control pills taken 12 hours apart and within 72 hours of unprotected intercourse emergency IUD insertion -- within five days of unprotected intercourse. (This is no longer very often since the FDA approval of Plan B is for use only if a woman is sure she is not already pregnant. It keeps the egg from joining with the sperm or prevents the egg from implanting in the uterus.

**Effectiveness**
A woman's risk of pregnancy varies from day to day during her menstrual cycle.

**Reason not recommended for teens**
Some teens may not have transportation to a clinic or health care provider available confidentially and as quickly as needed. This method must be used as soon as possible, 24-48 hours after sex and up to 72 hours. High doses of hormones can make teens very sick (hours of vomiting).

This information was compiled by [http://www.coolnurse.com/birthcontrol.htm](http://www.coolnurse.com/birthcontrol.htm)