

Contraception “WHICH ONE?”

There are many forms of contraception. Contraception is a form of birth control. Although, some methods of contraception also protect from STD's (sexual transmitted diseases). How well birth control works depends on a number of factors. These include medical conditions, or are people taking any drugs prescribed or not. Whether it is convenient, or if it causes any side effects. The main forms of contraception in order of the most commonly used through out the world.

Pill, condoms, female sterilisation, vasectomy, mini pill (POP - Progesterone Only Pill), the cap (including diaphragm), coil, natural family planning -rhythm method, contraception jab and mirena (IUS - Implants/Patch(EVRA)).

The Pill or the combined pill contains E strogens and Progesterone was introduced in Puerto-Rico in 1956. In 2005 it was calculated that 3.5 million women used this method in the U.K, which is 1 in every 3 women that are of reproductive age, over 100 million women in the world are known to use t his form of contraception.

The pill works by preventing the egg from being produced, it also thickens the secretions around the cervix, making it more difficult for sperm to get through. There are an incredible 23 brands on the market, in the U.K today. Some women can get confused with the combined pill and the mini pill. The advantages of the combined pill are varied, it is known to protect against cancer of the womb and ovaries, it prevents osteoporosis, and it also regulates periods and helps with PMS one advantage that a lot of mature adults like about the pill is that unlike condoms, it does not interfere with sexual intercourse. The combine pill can also be taken from 6 weeks after giving birth.

One disadvantage some have said is that it can wor sen postnatal depression by inhibiting the natural production of Progesterone and missing even one pill, can increase the chances of pregnancy, the side affects known during taking the pill, are, headaches, water retention, nausea, weight gain and depressi on. The combined pill is not recommended for smokers over 35, or those who have diabetes or even high blood pressure. Using it is simple, you get proscribed 21 pills in a packet, taking one pill every morning (preferably the same time every day) then you do not take the pill for 7 days (while menstruating), i.e. 3 weeks on 1 week off.

The condom known as Prophylactic, rubber or Johnny, is made of latex or polyurethane, a form of rubber (they were also made from animal intestines but are seldom seen now). It is about 7 inches long, although various sizes are available. The condom and femidom are sheaths that trap sperm, and they reduce the chance of pregnancy and STD's (Sexual Transmitted Disease.)

The advantages are that it stops sperm form entering the vagina, it is easy to use, and there is a minimal health risk. They are also widely available, they

can be found in shops, in doctor's surgeries, walk in centres and most public toilets.

The disadvantages are varied, they may tear during sexual intercourse, and can slip off inside the female's vagina. During sexual intercourse it may cause a dulling of

sensations but the most common disadvantage for a condom is, it interrupts sexual intercourse.

The femidom was launched 13 years ago, it looks like a tiny plastic bin liner, at one end of the femidom, there is an opening, shaped like a ring, on the other side, which is narrower, is another smaller ring, this is the end that is inserted into the vagina. It is made of Polyurethane, not latex which means it can be used with oil based lubricants.

The Injection, known as the Jab, or "Jag" in Scotland. It is used by many women worldwide. There are 2 types in Britain, Noristerit, this contains Norethisterone, and this particular drug is known to cause sore breasts. Depo-Provera which contains Medroxy and progesterone, this works by stopping ovulating, while thickening the mucus in the cervix, and thins the lining in the womb, which prevents pregnancy. The advantages of the injection are that, diabetics can use it and so can people with high blood pressure, it is long lasting, roughly 6 months, you don't have to remember to take it every morning, all that is needed is an appointment at the doctors every 5/6 months. With this particular type, fertility may take up to 1 year to return to normal, heavy periods (hemorrhagic) when regular periods do return, or irregular periods (oligomenorrhoea) occur for a number of cycles. The side effects of Depo-Provera are tummy ache, weakness and absent periods, which some women may find is an advantage.

Implants were introduced in the 90's, but they received a rather bad press, this is because they often caused menstrual problems. In the early 2000's there were stories that implants moved around the body. The Implant is the size of a matchstick, it contains etonorgestrel, and it is inserted in the upper arm, just above the elbow. When needed, it releases a steady stream of a female type of hormone into the blood stream, which eventually reaches the ovaries, this substance stops all eggs from being released. The advantages for the implant are they can't be seen, if there is a problem it can be removed. It also lasts up to 3 years. No condoms, no jabs, no pills. This is an advantage for many women. The disadvantages for implants are it can be felt, some women find this disturbing, it can move, and also leaves a scar. They are not appropriate for those that have undiagnosed vaginal bleeding, severe liver disease, suffer from thrombosis, or with a history of certain types of cancer, or cysts in the ovaries.

Coil/IUD (Intrauterine Devise). This is a T shaped implement, which is inserted into the womb itself, it prevents implanting of a fertilized egg. The coil prevents sperm from getting into the fallopian tubes, and alters the secretion (mucus) in the cervix. Only 5% of women in the U.K have used this method.

The advantages are that it works as soon as it is implanted, and has no affect on breast feeding or hormones.

The disadvantages are that women may have heavy periods, or can get uterine cramping, and there is a greater risk of pelvic inflammatory disease. For the coil there is a yearly check up. Many women have become anaemic (weak blood) while having the coil inside of them.

EFFECTIVENESS

Combined pill	97% (if taken as proscribed, more likely 100%)
Condom	98% (protects from STD's)
Femidom	95%
Injection (Jab/Jag)	99.7%
Coil/IUD	98%

The choices of contraception methods are quite varied with a number of considerations to be made before you decide whi ch one is best for you, my personal opinion would be to use condoms as I would rather know that I have some protection from STDs as well as not getting pregnant.

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