

Remember . . .  
even if you are using  
another method of  
contraception, only  
condoms offer  
protection from  
both unintended  
pregnancy  
and STIs.

Get the  
facts about  
contraception  
from True

Visit [www.true.org.au](http://www.true.org.au) or contact  
one of the following locations:

- Brisbane 3250 0240
- Cairns 4051 3788
- Gold Coast 5531 2636
- Ipswich 3281 4088
- Rockhampton 4927 3999
- Sunshine Coast 5479 0755
- Toowoomba 4632 8166

Where to get  
help and  
advice about  
contraception

- Family planning clinics
- Sexual health clinics
- Women's health centres
- Youth health centres
- Your local doctor
- [www.true.org.au](http://www.true.org.au)

**Disclaimer**

All intellectual property rights including copyright, design, text, graphics and logos relating to this publication belong to True Relationships & Reproductive Health (True) or are licensed by True. These intellectual property rights are protected by Australian and international laws. You may not in any form or by any means sublicense, copy, adapt, reproduce (other than for the purpose of viewing the publication in your browser for non-commercial purposes), store, modify, distribute, upload, or create any derivative works from any part of this publication without True's prior written consent.

True has taken every care to ensure that the information contained in this publication is accurate and up-to-date at the time of being published. True does not accept responsibility for difficulties that may arise as a result of reliance by you on the accuracy or currency of information in the publication. True recommends that the information contained in this publication be read in its entire form and considered in the context of the particular circumstances of each case.

True excludes certain of its liability to you on the terms of the disclaimer available at <http://www.true.org.au/copyright> which you should read in its entirety.



contraception  
→ choices

# What is contraception?

Contraception means prevention of pregnancy. There are a number of different methods of contraception and it is important to choose the one that best meets your needs. Using a method you are happy with means you will be able to enjoy sex without the worry of an unintended pregnancy.



## So what method to use?

Considerations when choosing contraception should include accurate information about:

- effectiveness in pregnancy prevention
- health issues which may limit some choices
- ease of use
- side effects including changes to usual periods
- benefits other than contraception
- cost and availability
- reversibility
- protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

**The most effective reversible methods are the “fit and forget” long acting reversible contraceptives (LARCs) – intrauterine devices (IUDs) and contraceptive implants.**

Talking with your local True Relationships & Reproductive Health (True) clinic or your doctor about all methods will ensure that you have enough information to choose the one that suits you best. You can also refer to True's contraception factsheets at [www.True.com.au](http://www.True.com.au) for more details on individual contraceptive methods.

## The contraceptive implant – Implanon NXT®

Implanon NXT® is a small flexible rod, which is inserted in the inner arm above the elbow, where it continuously releases a low dose of a progestogen (similar to the hormone progesterone, which is naturally produced by the female body) into the blood stream to prevent pregnancy for up to 3 years. Devices need to be replaced every 3 years or can be removed earlier if required.



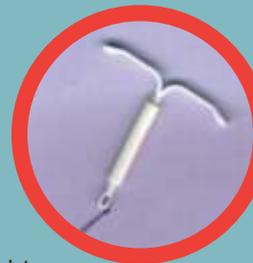
The implant works by:

- preventing ovulation (egg release from the ovary)

Implants are 99.9% effective and are available from True clinics and other doctors who have had training in implant insertion and removal.

## The progestogen releasing intrauterine system – Mirena®

Mirena® is a small T-shaped device made of plastic that is placed inside the uterus (womb), where it slowly releases a very low dose of progestogen to prevent pregnancy for up to 5 years. Periods usually become lighter or may stop when using a hormonal IUD.



Mirena® works by:

- changing the lining of the uterus, making it unsuitable for pregnancy
- thickening the mucus of the cervix so that sperm cannot enter the uterus

The hormonal IUD is 99.8% effective and is available from True clinics as well as gynaecologists and some doctors.

## Copper intrauterine contraceptive device (Cu-IUD)

The Cu-IUD is a small device made from plastic and copper that is fitted inside the uterus. There are 2 types of copper IUDs available in Australia – the Multiload Cu 375® and the TT 380®. They can be used as contraception for 5 or 10 years respectively and can be easily removed at any time. They have no hormones and therefore no effect on the normal female cycle but periods may become heavier.



The Cu-IUD works by:

- preventing sperm from moving through the uterus and from fertilising ova (eggs)
- preventing implantation of a fertilised ovum (egg)

Cu-IUDs are 99.2% effective and are available from True clinics as well as gynaecologists and some doctors.

## Depo Medroxyprogesterone Acetate (DMPA)

DMPA is similar to the hormone progesterone and is given by injection into a muscle every 12 weeks. It is slowly absorbed into the blood stream to prevent pregnancy. Periods may stop while using DMPA and there may be a short delay in return to usual fertility.



DMPA works by:

- preventing ovulation (egg release from the ovary)

DMPA is 94-99.8% effective and is available on prescription from True clinics or your doctor.

## → Combined oral contraceptive pill (The Pill)

The Combined Oral Contraceptive Pill (COC), commonly referred to as 'The Pill', is an oral contraceptive taken daily. It contains the hormones oestrogen and progesterone. These are similar to the hormones naturally produced by the female body. The Pill may help with acne or heavy periods.



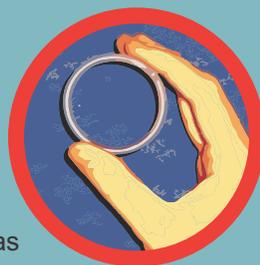
The Pill mainly works by:

- preventing ovulation (egg release from the ovary)

The Pill relies on regular and consistent daily use to be effective. It is available on prescription from True clinics or your doctor.

## → The contraceptive vaginal ring – NuvaRing®

NuvaRing® is a soft, plastic ring which releases low daily doses of two hormones, oestrogen and a progesterone, into the bloodstream. These hormones are similar to those naturally produced by the female body and the same as those used in the combined oral contraceptive ('The Pill').



NuvaRing® mainly works by:

- preventing ovulation (egg release from the ovary)

The ring is self-inserted and remains in the vagina for 3 weeks and is then removed and replaced with the next ring a week later. NuvaRing® is available on a prescription from True clinics or your doctor.

## → Progesterone-only contraceptive pill (POP)

The POP, sometimes referred to as 'The Mini-Pill', is an oral contraceptive containing a low dose of progesterone, which is similar to the hormone progesterone, which is naturally produced by the female body.

The POP works by:

- thickening of the mucus of the cervix so that sperm cannot enter the uterus (womb)

The POP can be used by most women, even if they have any significant health issues but relies on regular and consistent daily use to be effective. It is available on prescription from True clinics or your doctor.

## → Condoms – male and female

**The male condom** is a sheath made of thin, strong, latex rubber or polyurethane, which is rolled onto the erect penis before vaginal, anal or oral sex. The male condom is 82-98% effective for pregnancy prevention and consistent use is very important if they are the sole method of contraception. Condoms can be used in conjunction with other methods to increase contraceptive effectiveness.



**The female condom** is a polyurethane sheath, which is inserted into the vagina before sexual intercourse. It is about 15cm long and has two flexible rings to keep it in place in the vagina. The female condom is 79-95% effective.

Condoms work by:

- acting as a physical barrier that stops body fluids (eg semen, vaginal fluids) passing between sexual partners. They can only be used once.

Remember . . .  
even if you are  
using another  
method of  
contraception,  
only condoms offer  
protection from  
both unintended  
pregnancy  
and STIs.

Male condoms are available from True clinics, pharmacies, supermarkets and vending machines. They come in different shapes, flavours, textures, sizes and colours.

Female condoms are available from True clinics and some other sexual health services.

# What is Emergency Contraception (EC)

Emergency contraception can be used to reduce the risk of pregnancy after unprotected sex.



EC is available to women who are at risk of unintended pregnancy after sexual intercourse.

EC works by:

- delaying or stopping ovulation (the release of an egg from the ovary)

Methods of EC available in Australia are:

**Emergency contraceptive pills**, commonly called the morning-after pill, are most effective if started within 24 hours after unprotected sex, but can be used up to 5 days later. The sooner they are taken the better.

Emergency contraception pills are readily available, without prescription, from most chemists. They are also available from True clinics and other sexual health services.

**A copper intrauterine contraceptive device (IUD)** can be inserted up to 5 days after unprotected sex as a very effective emergency contraceptive option. The IUD is not suitable for all women.

IUDs are available from True clinics, some doctors, gynaecologists and fertility clinics.

## → Diaphragm

The diaphragm is a dome-shaped latex rubber cap, worn in the vagina during and after sexual intercourse to reduce the risk of pregnancy.

Diaphragms are available in different sizes and there are two types available – arcing or coil spring.

The diaphragm works by:

- fitting inside the vagina to cover the cervix, providing a barrier to prevent sperm entering the uterus (womb) after ejaculation

Diaphragms may be bought from True clinics and most chemists once the correct size and type is known.



## → Sterilisation

Sterilisation is a permanent method of contraception. Female sterilisation involves blocking the Fallopian tubes to stop the passage of the ovum. Both surgical and non-surgical methods are available. Male sterilisation (vasectomy) involves an operation on the vas deferens to prevent the passage of sperm.

More information about sterilisation is available from True clinics or your doctor.

## → Natural methods of contraception

Natural methods of contraception do not rely on the use of hormones or devices and include the following:

**Fertility Awareness Based Methods (FABMs)** use awareness of the fertile phase in the menstrual cycle to indicate when sexual intercourse should be avoided to prevent pregnancy.

Further information and local contacts can be found at [www.nfpprog.com](http://www.nfpprog.com) or [www.acnfp.com.au](http://www.acnfp.com.au).

**Breastfeeding – Lactational Amenorrhoea (LAM)** is the use of breastfeeding as a contraceptive method by women who fulfill the following criteria:

- fully breastfeeding and not feeding the baby with any food or milk supplements
- gave birth less than 6 months ago
- menstrual periods have not returned

Breastfeeding has an effect on the production of hormones that reduces the probability of ovulation (egg release) occurring, therefore reducing the chance of a pregnancy.

Contact a True clinic or your doctor for more information or advice.

**Withdrawal** is a method of contraception where the man takes his penis out (withdraws) from the woman's vagina before he ejaculates (comes). It is also known as coitus interruptus.

There are more effective forms of contraception and this method is generally not recommended.