

Hormonal Implants

IUD (Mirena, Skya, Liletta, Kyleena), Arm Implant (Nexplanon)

Common Side Effects

- Irregular spotting between periods, often only for first 6 months
- Periods diminish, this is not dangerous, it can actually be quite nice
- 90% less blood loss with 20% of patients no longer having periods
- Decreased cramping / pain associated with periods
- Decreased endometriosis systems
- Does not increase acne
- If you become pregnant with an IUD in place (very rare), it can complicate the pregnancy or cause a miscarriage

Risks

- Infection in your uterus after insertion, rare
- Perforation of uterus with insertion, less than 1% chance
- Expulsion, IUD could work its way out of your body over time, 2-10% chance

Benefits

- Lasts 3-7 years
- Easy to use, no user error
- Extremely effective, comparable to having your tubes tied
- No estrogen involved for women who do not tolerate it well
- Fertility returns quickly, can often get pregnant almost immediately after removal, 6 weeks later at the most
- May no longer have a period
- Decreases blood loss during periods / decreases heavy periods
- Decreases endometrial cancer risks
- Can be used as hormone replacement therapy during menopause

This birth control is not good for you if:

- You have an abnormally shaped uterus
- You have fibroids that greatly change the shape of your uterus
- You have a history of frequent STDs or currently have one, excluding HIV, hepatitis, and HSV
- You have a history of pelvic inflammatory disease
- You have had infections of the uterus in the past
- You've recently had a miscarriage related to infection
- You are on anti-retroviral therapy
- You have lupus
- You have breast cancer currently or a history of breast cancer
- You have recently been diagnosed with endometrial cancer
- You have gestational trophoblastic disease
- You currently have cervical cancer
- You currently have AIDS
- You have pelvic tuberculosis
- You've had complications with organ transplants

Non-Hormonal Implants

Copper IUD (Paraguard)

Common Side Effects

- Increased bleeding, increased cramping, heavier periods
- If you already have a heavy period or bad cramping, the copper IUD is not a good option for you
- If you become pregnant with a copper IUD in place (very rare), it can complicate the pregnancy or cause a miscarriage; copper IUDs have a slightly higher rate of pregnancy than hormonal IUDs

Risks

- Infection after insertion, rare
- Perforation of uterus with insertion, less than 1% chance
- Expulsion, IUD could work its way out of your body over time, 2-10% chance
- Anemia, relative to heavy blood loss

Benefits

- Lasts for 10 years
- Extremely effective, comparable to having your tubes tied
- Fertility returns quickly, can often get pregnant almost immediately after removal
- No hormones
- Can be used as emergency birth control, within 120 hours of unprotected sex

This birth control is not good for you if:

- You have endometriosis
- You have an abnormally shaped uterus
- You have fibroids that greatly change the shape of your uterus
- You have had infections of the uterus in the past
- You have a history of frequent STDs or currently have one, excluding HIV, hepatitis, and HSV
- You currently have AIDS
- You have a history of pelvic inflammatory disease
- You've recently had a "septic abortion"
- You're on anti-retroviral therapy
- You have thrombocytopenia
- You have been diagnosed with endometrial cancer
- You have gestational trophoblastic disease
- You currently have cervical cancer
- You have pelvic tuberculosis
- You've had complications with organ transplants

Combined Hormonal Methods

Pill, Patch, Ring

Common Side Effects

- Nausea
- Headaches
- Dizziness
- Spotting between periods
- Weight gain; typically the more estrogen, the more weight gain
- Breast tenderness
- Cholasma, skin color changes around eyes or lips on the face

Risks

- Cardiovascular risks: stroke, heart attack, blood clots, high blood pressure
- Depression, 10% chance of increase in only one study
- Hepatic adenomas, liver tumors prone to bleeding, less than 0.004% chance
- Increased cervical cancer risk, 1.6% increase

Benefits

- The pill must be taken every day
- The ring and patch are switched out once a month
- Decreased pain associated with periods
- Decreased heaviness of period, decreased blood loss with periods
- Regularity of cycles
- Decreased PMS moodiness and premenstrual dysphoric disorder
- Decreased hormonal migraines
- Protects against ectopic pregnancy
- Reduces acne
- Reduces risk of ovarian cancer (80% decrease) and endometrial cancer (40% decrease)
- Possible decrease in risk in colorectal cancer
- Decreases pain associated with endometriosis
- Treats hot flashes in peri-menopausal women
- Decreases sick cell crises
- Decreases uterine fibroid formation
- Increases bone mineral density

This birth control is not good for you if:

- You are a smoker
- You are over the age of 35 and smoke cigarettes
- You have headaches with “auras” or in other words you have funny sensations and know when your headaches are coming
- It’s been less than 42 days since you had a baby
- You are on seizure medications
- You are on anti-retroviral therapy
- You are currently breastfeeding
- You have high blood pressure
- You have known vascular disease
- You’ve ever had a history of blood clots or clots in your lungs
- You have a bleeding disorder that puts you at higher risk for blood clots
- You have high cholesterol
- You have certain heart conditions or arrhythmias
- You’ve had a stroke
- You currently have cancer
- You’ve had certain gastric bypass procedures that stop you from absorbing nutrients and medications
- You have diabetes with neuropathy or vision problems or have had diabetes for longer than 20 years
- You’ve had viral hepatitis in the past or tumors on your liver
- You’ve had a complicated organ transplant
- You’re having a major surgery where you won’t be moving around
- You have lupus

Barrier Methods

Condoms, Diaphragm

Common Side Effects

- Less sensation, decreased sexual sensitivity (condoms)
- Difficulty for men to obtain or maintain an erection (condoms)
- Lack of spontaneity
- Lack of cooperation by both partners
- Vaginal irritation, pelvic discomfort, allergic reaction (diaphragm)

Risks

- Allergic reaction to latex or synthetic materials
- Vaginal and urinary tract infections (diaphragm)
- Rarely toxic shock syndrome if left in too long (diaphragm)

Benefits

- Protects against sexually transmitted infections and viruses (condoms)

This birth control is not good for you if:

- You don't trust yourself to use them

Hormonal Injections

Shot (Depoprovera)

Common Side Effects

- Irregular / unpredictable periods in first year, 70% of patients experience this
- Periods stop for 40-50% of users after 1 year and 80% of users after 5 years
- Bone density decreases but is not permanently decreased
- Weight gain in 4-8% of users
- Headaches for 17% of users
- Changes in cholesterol
- Often 6-10 months until out of system and fertility returns

Risks

- Depression
- Allergic reaction
- Rapid weight gain
- Bone loss

Benefits

- Does not affect breastfeeding
- Requires the user to do very little
- Possibly protective of ovarian and endometrial cancers, 80% decrease in risk
- Decreases fibroid formation and recurrence of fibroids
- Decreases occurrence of sickle cell crises

This birth control is not good for you if:

- You have multiple cardiovascular risk factors like high blood pressure, older age, diabetes, and smoking
- You have a history of vascular disease
- You have current issues with bone density
- You have a history of heart disease or stroke