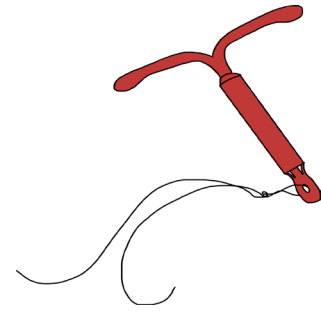


A Guide to Birth Control



Everything You Need to Know

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Most recently, 65.3% of women in the United States (ages 15-49) are on birth control. Birth control is used to prevent pregnancy, and comes in many different forms. IUDs, implants, daily pills, condoms, and more are all different types of birth controls that can be used before sex to prevent pregnancy. Although birth control is popular among many people, many misconceptions and stereotypes revolve around its purpose. Birth control is most common for preventing pregnancies, but it has many additional benefits for your mind, body, and lifestyle.

Each type of birth control is different, each with pros and cons that affect your decision of which contraceptive would be best for you. The most effective birth control to use is an IUD/Implant, which is 99% effective against pregnancy. An IUD is a small flexible piece of

plastic (usually shaped like a T) device inside your uterus. An IUD is a low maintenance and long term birth control method, and can last up to 12 years. It is also easily reversible, and can be taken out by a doctor any time you want. An IUD costs anywhere from \$0-1,300 to be inserted. An implant is similar to an IUD, but is instead inserted under the skin of the upper arm, and lasts up to 5 years. The birth control shot is a simple injection you get once every 3 months. This method is 94% effective, and costs \$0-150. The shot can cause your period to become lighter, and can help protect you from endometrial cancer (cancer in the uterus.) The pill is a common option that is 91% effective in preventing pregnancy, is taken daily, and costs anywhere from \$0-50 monthly. Since the pill must be taken every day to work, it may be hard to start a habit of remembering to take it. Birth control pills

aren't only made to prevent pregnancy, but can also protect against ovarian and endometrial cancer, reduce period cramps/bleeding, and reduce acne. Karli Goode '23, uses the Kyleena IUD, a brand of birth control. "... For me, I knew I could never remember a pill and I wanted something that lasted a long time so it was easier, but then again some birth controls have very different effects on women and I think trial and error is a big thing to find what's best suited for your lifestyle." said Goode. Many women use a period tracker and birth control app to help them track their period and any birth control method that affects their cycle. The patch is a thin patch that sticks to the skin and releases hormones through the skin, and is applied once a week. This method is 91% effective, and costs \$0-150. A birth control ring is a flexible ring inside your vagina, and is 91% effective. The ring must be changed once a month, and costs \$0-200. This is a higher maintenance method, as you must be sure you're using it correctly and replacing it on time. Then, there's external and internal condoms, which can be used along with other birth control methods or by themselves each time you have sex. Internal condoms are an alternative to regular condoms, and cover the inside of your vagina, creating a barrier just like a regular condom would. Condoms are 85% effective and cost \$0-2, while internal condoms are 79% effective and cost \$0-3.

Common misconceptions and stereotypes revolving around birth control are spread due to lack of education and/or disagreement. **Birth Control Causes Cancer-** Hormonal birth controls can actually help lower the risk of

cancers such as endometrial, ovarian, and colorectal.

Birth Control Can Prevent STIs- Even though barrier methods such as condoms can reduce risk of STIs, they do not prevent all STIs. For example, Herpes can live on parts of the genital that aren't covered by a condom.

Hormonal Types of Birth Control Can Cause Abortions- Mainly made up by anti-abortion groups, birth controls cannot cause abortions.

Birth Control Damages Fertility- Although periods may be irregular after birth control this doesn't mean that this causes infertility.

The Morning-after Pill Is Like an Abortion- Although high dosed birth controls such as Plan-B can be used to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex, it does not cause an abortion (an abortion is a medical procedure that interrupts the already established pregnancy.)

Older People Don't Need Birth Control- According to Zawn Villines, a medical and legal writer, it is still possible to get pregnant despite your age. "Until a person has gone through menopause and had 12 consecutive

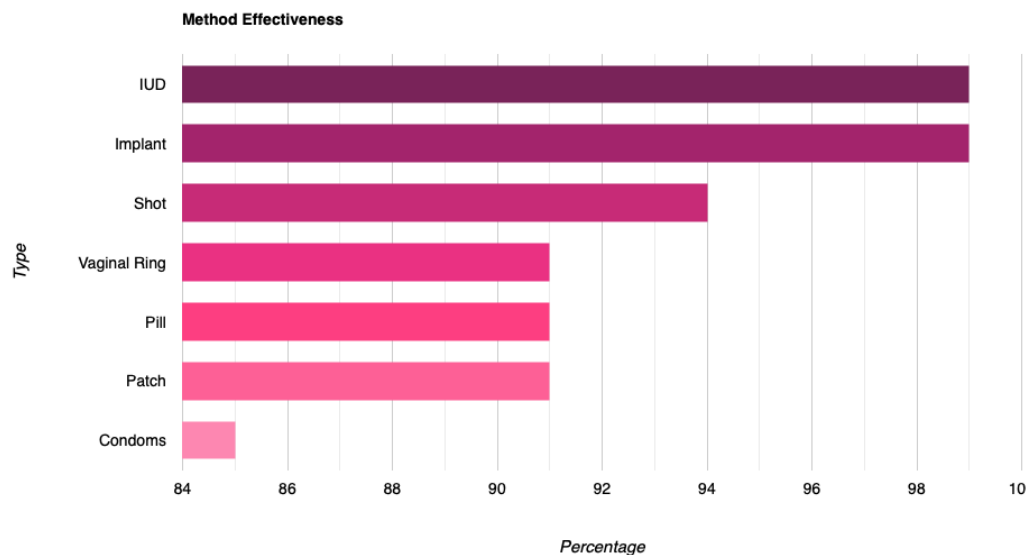
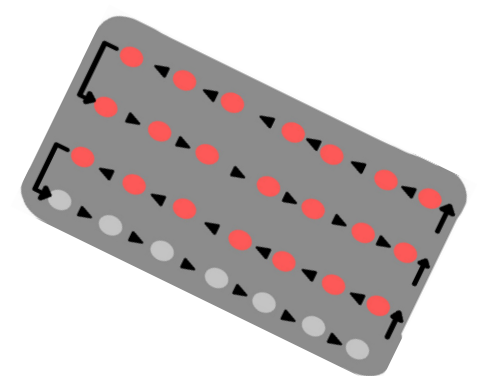
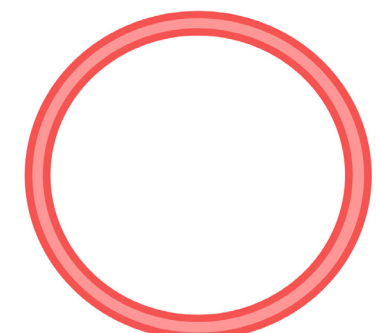
after, like what to expect besides things like changes with your period..." said Goode. It's important to know that you aren't married to one type of birth control once you start. For example, if you start off using the pill but you realize it isn't the right fit for you, talk to your doctor! You know your body best, so don't be afraid to switch methods if needed. Kali Anderson '23, isn't on birth control, but is disappointed with the lack of information she and others have received about birth control. "I think a big thing is the side effects. I barely even knew about birth control (particularly the pill) even after health class. Even with what they taught, I barely knew any of the side effects like depression, anxiety, just all the stuff that can come with taking birth control. If it weren't for the internet I wouldn't even know the side effects existed." said Anderson.

In order to educate yourself and others about birth control, you can visit websites such as Planned Parenthood for questions, concerns, and more information on each method. PPFA (Planned Parenthood Federation of America) is a non-profit healthcare organization that provides services such as birth control, cancer screening and prevention, hormone therapy, abortion, STD testing and more. There are over 600 PPFA centers across America, and are available to all women, men, and young people. Some local Iowa PPFA centers can be found in Des Moines, Urbandale, Ames, Iowa City, and more. Make sure to reach out to trusted adults (parent/guardian, doctor ext.) in your life if you are wanting to start on birth control, or if you have any questions/concerns.

"I think birth control is very different for everyone and my experiences aren't going to be the same as everyone else's necessarily..." - Karli Goode '23

months without a period, pregnancy is still possible. While male fertility also declines with age, males can remain fertile well into their 60s, 70s, and beyond." said Villines.

Because of these stereotypes, many women are left in the dark when knowing what to expect when starting birth control, and how important it is to customize your choice to your needs and lifestyle. "...I wish I would've known about how painful the IUD really is, and maybe more about what happens



Most Common Birth Control
 19%- Female Sterilization
 13%- Pill
 9%- Male Condom
 6%- Male Sterilization

