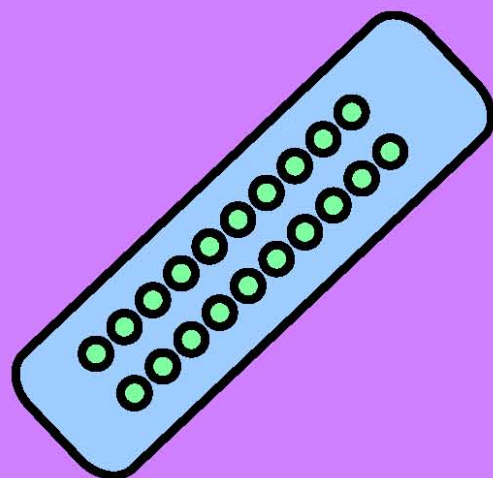
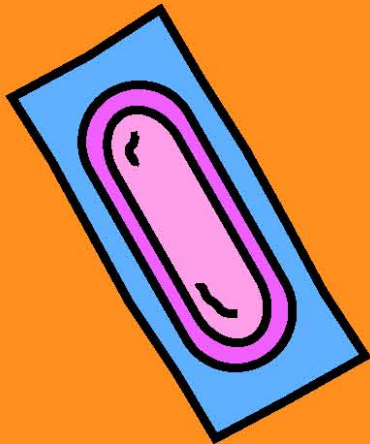
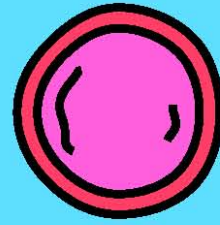
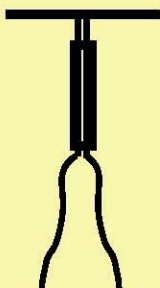
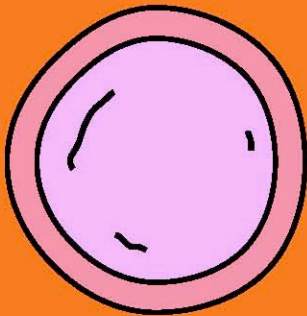
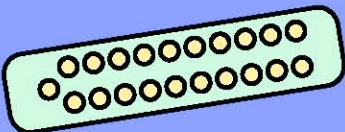


INFORMATION ABOUT
CONTRACEPTION
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



AVERT
AVERTing HIV & AIDS Worldwide

What is contraception?



If you have sexual intercourse, pregnancy can be prevented by using a reliable method of contraception. Contraception is sometimes called birth control.

There are about a dozen different types of contraception. The two types most often used by young people are the male condom - which boys use, and the contraceptive pill which girls take.

'We decided together which contraceptive we would use when we started to have sex. Because neither of us wanted to have a baby.'

Some facts about pregnancy

To understand contraception, you need to be clear how pregnancy happens. Having full sexual intercourse - when a boy's hard penis goes inside a girl's vagina - is what usually leads to pregnancy. However, it can also occur even if a boy's penis just touches the outside of the vagina.

Sometime between the ages of about 11 and 15, a girl begins to have periods. This shows that her ovaries have begun to produce eggs. An egg is released every month. If it does not meet up with the sperm, that comes out of the boy's penis during intercourse, the egg dies. Then it leaves the body in the blood, which comes out through the vagina during a girl's period every month.

If a girl has sexual intercourse with a boy - and neither of them uses a contraceptive - the girl could become pregnant and a baby will begin to grow inside her womb.

A girl can become pregnant:

- *The first time she has sex*
- *Even if she has sex standing up*
- *Even if she has sex during her period*
- *Even if a boy pulls out before he comes*
- *If she forgets to take her pill*



Condoms

The male condom is the only method of contraception boys can use. It's really just a rubber tube which is closed at one end like the finger of a glove. So when a boy puts it over his penis it stops the sperm going inside a girl's body. An advantage of using condoms is that a boy can take an active part in using contraception. It's not just left to the girl.

- *How good are they?*

Condoms are good at providing protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), but they are not quite as good as the pill in providing protection against pregnancy.

- *Are there different kinds of condoms?*

Condoms come in different colours, shapes and sizes. Some have a slippery coating called lubrication to help make sex easier. Others are flavoured to make oral sex more enjoyable. Some have fine ribs on the outside because some people find this also makes sex more enjoyable and some are thicker for anal intercourse. Most condoms are around the same length, but some have a slightly smaller width to give a 'closer' fit. Condoms that are a little longer or slightly wider are also available. It's a good idea to try different types to find the ones you both like best.

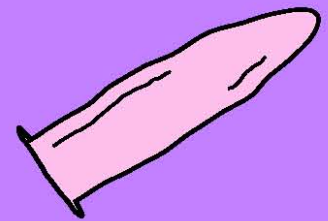
Practising with condoms before having sex is a good idea as it gets you used to touching them. This might help you feel more confident about using them when you do have sex.

- *Getting condoms*

You can buy condoms from chemists, supermarkets, some garages and machines in the public toilets. You don't have to be over sixteen. Condoms vary in price, but you might be able to get them from a Family Planning Clinic or your family doctor for free.

- *What is the female condom?*

The female condom is a condom used by girls. It is larger than the male condom and fits inside the vagina. Like the male condom it acts as a barrier and prevents sperm getting inside a girl's body.



Using the male condom

• *'How do you put a condom on?'*

Condoms are individually wrapped in foil. The foil should have a date on it and if the date is past you shouldn't use the condom. Condoms are made of very thin rubber so when you try and open the foil packet be careful not to rip it. You can try pushing the condom down to one end of the packet and ripping the other end off the foil. Condoms are delicate so that you can enjoy the feelings of sex without losing sensation.

When you take a condom out of its packet it is rolled up and will only unroll in one direction – with the ring on the outside. Condoms look quite small but the rubber is very stretchy. They fit any size or shape of penis.

Some condoms have a small teat at the end to hold the sperm that comes out during sex. It's important to squeeze all the air out of this teat before the condom is put on. It helps if you hold the teat as you roll the condom down over the penis.

• *'When do you put a condom on?'*

When the penis is hard, unroll the condom all the way down. A boy must put the condom on before his penis touches a girl's vagina. Sperm can leak out before a boy actually comes. So even if the penis only touches the vagina some sperm could get inside and lead to pregnancy.



• *'Is it better when you use Vaseline?'*

No. Because Vaseline, along with oily creams like baby oil can damage the rubber and make condoms useless. Many condoms already have a lubricant on the outside. This makes it easier for a boy to push his penis into a girl's vagina. If it is difficult, and you want to use extra lubrication, make sure it is special jelly (KY for example) that you can buy from chemists or supermarkets.

• *'What do we do after he has come?'*

After a boy comes, his penis begins to go soft again and gets smaller very quickly. To make sure the condom doesn't slip off he should pull out carefully, soon after coming. He can help make sure the condom doesn't slip off by holding onto the bottom of the condom when pulling out.

After having sex it's best to make sure all the air is out of the condom, tie a knot in it and put it in a dustbin. Condoms must only be used once.

The Pill

• 'What does 'going on the pill' mean?'

People often talk about being 'on the pill'. This means a girl is using the oral contraceptive pill as a method of contraception. This has nothing to do with oral sex, which is when one person kisses, licks or sucks another person's penis or vagina. It just means that the contraceptive is in pill form, which the girl swallows.

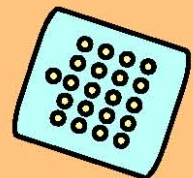
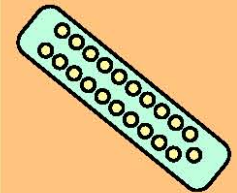
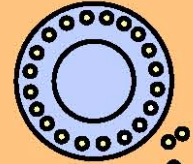
• 'How does "the pill" work?'

The pill contains chemicals called hormones. One type of pill called the combined pill has two hormones in it called Oestrogen and Progesterone. The combined pill stops the release of an egg every month – but doesn't stop periods.

The other type of pill only has Progesterone in it. It works by altering the mucus lining of the vagina to make it thicker. The sperm cannot then get through, and as the sperm and the egg can't meet, the girl can't get pregnant.

• 'What do you do?'

Usually the girl has to take one pill every day for about three weeks in every month. It is very important not to forget to take these pills. If this happens, protection against pregnancy is lost. The Progesterone-only pill also has to be taken at the same time every day.



• 'How do you know which type of 'pill' to take?'

To find out which type is suitable a girl has to talk to a doctor. Contraceptive Pills are only available from a doctor. You can't just go into a chemist or supermarket and buy them.

The pill can sometimes produce 'side-effects' – for example, headaches or skin problems. If this happens, the pill can be changed for a different one. The possibility of side-effects is another reason why the contraceptive pill is only available from a doctor. If a girl has any worries at all about using the pill, the best thing is to talk to a doctor about it.

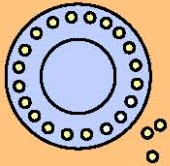
It is a very effective method of contraception. If the pill is taken exactly according to the instructions, the chance of pregnancy occurring is practically nil.

A disadvantage of the pill is that it does not provide any protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Using the pill and a condom provides protection against both pregnancy and STIs.

What other kinds of contraception are there?

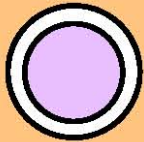
Sometimes a girl may not want to take the pill or may find that it doesn't suit her. There are three common alternatives to the pill that girls can use.

Injectable contraceptives



The most popular injectable contraceptive is called Depo-Provera. This involves the girl having an injection once every twelve weeks. The injection is of the hormone Progestogen. The injection works in the same way in the body as the Progestogen only pill, but has the advantage that you do not have to remember to take a pill every day.

The Cap or Diaphragm



These are made of rubber and fit high up inside the vagina. They form a barrier between the egg and the sperm. They come in different shapes and sizes and you have to be shown by a doctor or nurse how to put it in and take it out.

The cap or diaphragm does not stay inside the vagina all the time. It is put into the vagina a few hours before having sex. A spermicide cream (which kills sperm) has to be used as well. The cap or diaphragm must be left in for at least six hours after sex.

The IUD



This stands for Intrauterine Device. This is a small device that is usually T-shaped. A doctor fits the IUD inside your womb. It stays in place permanently for as long as contraception is needed. Regular checks by a doctor are important to make sure it is properly in place. An advantage of both the cap or diaphragm and the IUD is that they are effective in stopping pregnancy if used properly. A disadvantage is that they provide no protection against STIs. Once an IUD or a cap/diaphragm is correctly in place the girl cannot feel it. A boy will not be able to feel it during sex either.

Getting these other contraceptives

These other contraceptives are only available in the UK through a doctor. You can go to your family doctor (GP) if they provide a contraceptive service. Or, if you prefer you can make an appointment to see another doctor at your own or a different surgery. You can get details of the service a doctor provides by ringing the surgery.

There are also special services, often called Family Planning Clinics, which can give you advice about contraception. They can also provide contraceptives. In some places there are Family Planning Clinics especially for young people, sometimes called Youth Advisory Services.

Emergency (after sex) contraception

'I had sex with my boyfriend last night and we didn't use anything! What can I do?'

Sometimes, when they are having sexual intercourse, boys and girls don't use contraception. If they are lucky the girl will not become pregnant. But it's a big risk to take.

Even if a couple do use contraception things can sometimes go wrong. If you forget to use a contraceptive, or use it incorrectly, a girl can still prevent pregnancy if she uses emergency contraception.

*'I missed a pill this week before having sex'
'I used a condom but it split. I'm really worried now'.*

There are two types of emergency contraception. Both are very effective in preventing pregnancy, but a girl must visit a GP or a clinic as soon as possible after having sex.

The Emergency Contraceptive Pill

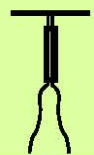
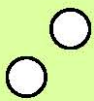
This involves taking one or two special pills. The first pill must be taken within three days of having sex (72 hours), but it is best to take it as soon as possible after sex.

The IUD

The IUD (Intrauterine Device) can be used as a normal form of contraception. It can also be used in an emergency. The IUD is fitted into the womb by a doctor. The IUD must be fitted within five days of having sex, but the sooner the better.

WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOU'RE PREGNANT?

After five days, emergency contraception cannot be used and the girl must wait to see if her next period comes. If she misses her next period she may be pregnant and should get a pregnancy test done as soon as possible. To get a free test you can go to a doctor, or a clinic, or you can buy a home testing kit from a chemist. If you are pregnant you should try to talk to your family and partner as soon as possible.



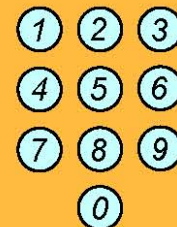
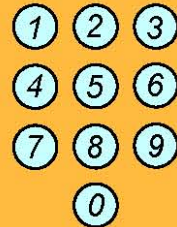
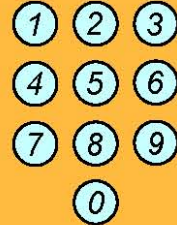
Further help and advice

Talking about your feelings, worries and concerns can help.

'It's good to have someone in your life who is an adult, someone who you can talk to'.

The person you talk to should be someone you feel easy and relaxed with. Sometimes talking to parents or people you are close to might be difficult. But you could talk to a friend or their parents or a teacher or a doctor - anyone you feel you can trust and will help you in some way.

For a list of websites and telephone helplines that can provide further help and advice, please visit: www.avert.org/help.htm



This booklet is produced by the international HIV & AIDS charity, AVERT.

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