A guide to contraception

**IS EVERYBODY DOING IT?**

I'm waiting for that special person.

I have.

I'm dying to!

They do NOT!

If only.

HAS he?

Will Mum find out?

I bet they are.

I'd LIKE to!

I don't want to.

They DO!

Should we?

PLEASE don't ask.

Does he?

I bet she does.

Will I ever?

Can they tell I don't?

If only.

Has he?

I have. I'm dying to!

They DO!

I don't want to.

We do.

SOB! Everybody ELSE is!

I'd LIKE to!

Does he?

I bet she does.

Do I HAVE to?

I have.

Will I ever?
MOST young people are NOT having sex.

The average age when people first have sex is 16, but you're not unusual if you wait until you're older – many people do!

FOR young people there can be a lot of pressure to have a girlfriend or boyfriend.

It can be hard if all your mates are going out with someone and you aren't, but it doesn't mean there's anything wrong with you. People start having romantic and sexual partners at different ages.

IT'S your choice when and if to have sex.
It's an important decision and you don't have to do it until you're ready.

NEVER feel you have to have sex because someone's pressuring you to...

SOME people are attracted to people of a different gender, some to the same gender, some to more than one gender and some to no one. This might change throughout your life.

WHO's having sex?

We love each other... it's only natural.
Paul and Vicky do it...
You'd do it if you really loved me.
Don't worry, I'll be very careful...
It's bad to be so frustrated.
ARE YOU READY TO HAVE SEX?

You can decide for yourself when you feel ready for sex.

What's right for YOU is what's important. If someone's pressuring you to do something you're not ready for, this isn't a healthy relationship.

Sex should feel good – so feeling certain that you're ready will help you enjoy it more.

You don't have to have sex with everyone you go out with. It's still your choice, however many times you've had sex before.

PEOPLE often find that changing a relationship to a sexual one is a bigger step than they think.

You and your partner should both feel ready.

If you have any doubts, it's OK to wait instead of doing something you might regret later.

Only have sex with each other if you both have 'yes' feelings.

If you DO decide to start having sex, be prepared. Condoms help protect you from infections and contraception protects you from unplanned pregnancy.

Kissing and touching can be a lot of fun and are all part of sex.

And knowing how your partner likes to be touched is what makes you a good lover.
**WHAT about CONTRACEPTION?**

**Contraception** stops a sperm from joining with an egg to make a baby.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOW OLD DO I HAVE TO BE TO GET HELP WITH CONTRACEPTION?</th>
<th>WILL A DOCTOR OR NURSE TELL MY PARENTS I'M HAVING SEX IF I'M UNDER 16?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It doesn't matter how old you are or what gender you are.</td>
<td>No. Even if you're under 16, doctors, nurses and other healthcare staff still have to keep anything you tell them private.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Many services run sessions for young people.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DO I NEED MY PARENTS' PERMISSION?</th>
<th>SO EVERYTHING'S COMPLETELY CONFIDENTIAL?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No, not to see a doctor or nurse, but it can be helpful to talk about things with a parent or carer.</td>
<td>All services are confidential – this means they won’t tell anyone else about it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiding the fact you're having sex can be very stressful. Talking to them or another adult that you trust may make life a lot easier.</td>
<td>However, they may need to involve other services if they believe you, or another person, to be at significant risk of harm (such as physical, sexual or emotional abuse). They'll discuss this with you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>They may also be able to help you!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Who’s responsible for sorting out contraception?**

It’s a shared responsibility between you and the person you have sex with.

That’s why it’s important to talk about contraception with a partner. Decide which method’s right for you both, and what you’d do if it failed.

Don’t assume your partner will already have it sorted.
You can get information and confidential help from a doctor or nurse, contraception clinic, pharmacist or sexual health clinic even if you're under 16, so there's no need to take any risks.

**BEING CAREFUL**
If you don't use contraception perfectly every time, the risk of pregnancy is much higher. If you or a partner don't want to get pregnant, **always** use contraception according to the instructions – or consider a long-acting method.

**CAN A DOCTOR OR NURSE REFUSE TO GIVE ME CONTRACEPTION IF I'M UNDER 16?**
They can, but it's unlikely. The fact that you've asked for contraception shows that you've made a mature decision.

Doctors and nurses do have to follow guidelines if you're under 16 and they may suggest you talk to a parent or carer about this.

If a doctor does refuse to give you contraception you can ask why or try another doctor, contraception clinic or young people's clinic.

**WHO WILL I NEED TO SEE?**
You'll usually see a doctor or a nurse. They'll be able to advise you and often give you contraception.

Let the staff know if you'd prefer to be seen by a doctor or nurse of the same gender as you.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTRACEPTION METHOD</th>
<th>CONTRACEPTIVE IMPLANT</th>
<th>IUS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most methods of contraception have to be obtained from a doctor or nurse, though condoms can be bought from many places.</td>
<td>Over 99% effective.</td>
<td>Over 99% effective.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**How EFFECTIVE is it?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CONTRACEPTION METHOD</strong></th>
<th><strong>CONTRACEPTIVE IMPLANT</strong></th>
<th><strong>IUS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Works for 3 years.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t have to think about contraception while it’s in place.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Works for 3 or 5 years but you can have it taken out earlier.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Periods often become lighter, shorter and sometimes less painful.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What ADVANTAGES does it have?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CONTRACEPTION METHOD</strong></th>
<th><strong>CONTRACEPTIVE IMPLANT</strong></th>
<th><strong>IUS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Periods may stop, be irregular, or longer.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acne may occur or worsen.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irregular bleeding is common in the first 6 months.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insertion can be uncomfortable.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**What DISADVANTAGES does it have?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CONTRACEPTION METHOD</strong></th>
<th><strong>CONTRACEPTIVE IMPLANT</strong></th>
<th><strong>IUS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Does it help protect from STIs?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>CONTRACEPTION METHOD</strong></th>
<th><strong>CONTRACEPTIVE IMPLANT</strong></th>
<th><strong>IUS</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONTRACEPTION METHODS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EXTERNAL</strong> and <strong>INTERNAL CONDOM</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONTRACEPTIVE INJECTION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>IUD</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Over 99% effective.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Over 99% effective if used perfectly every time. Around 94% effective if not used perfectly.</strong></td>
<td><strong>98% (external) and 95% (internal) effective if used perfectly every time. 82% (external) and 79% (internal) effective when not used perfectly.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Works as soon as it's put in, for 5 or 10 years.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Lasts for 13 weeks (Depo-Provera and Sayana Press).</strong></td>
<td><strong>Free from clinics and sold widely.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is the most effective type of emergency contraception.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Don’t have to think about contraception for as long as it works.</strong></td>
<td><strong>No side effects.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>External condoms come in a variety of shapes, sizes and flavours.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Periods may be heavier or longer and more painful.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Requires careful use.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Periods may stop, be irregular or longer.</strong></td>
<td><strong>May slip off or split.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Some people gain weight.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Must be put on before the penis touches a partner's genital area.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Some people report mood changes, spotty skin and breast tenderness.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Oil-based products will damage latex or polyisoprene condoms.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>No.</strong></td>
<td><strong>No.</strong></td>
<td><strong>Yes.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# CONTRACEPTION METHODS

## CONTRACEPTION METHOD
Most methods of contraception have to be obtained from a doctor or nurse, though condoms can be bought from many places.

## PROGESTOGEN-ONLY PILL
- Over 99% effective if used perfectly every time. Around 91% effective if not used perfectly.

## COMBINED PILL (contains estrogen and progestogen)
- Over 99% effective if used perfectly every time. Around 91% effective if not used perfectly.

### How EFFECTIVE is it?

**CONTRACTION METHOD**
- Over 99% effective if used perfectly every time. Around 91% effective if not used perfectly.

**PROGESTOGEN-ONLY PILL**
- Useful for women who can’t take the combined pill.
- No serious side effects.

**COMBINED PILL**
- Often reduces bleeding, period pain and pre-menstrual symptoms.
- Protects against cancer of the ovary, uterus (womb) and colon.

### What ADVANTAGES does it have?

**CONTRACTION METHOD**
- Periods may stop, be irregular, light, or more frequent.
- May be temporary side effects such as breast tenderness and spotty skin.

**PROGESTOGEN-ONLY PILL**
- May be temporary side effects such as headaches and breast tenderness.

**COMBINED PILL**
- Rare, but serious side effects may include blood clots, breast and cervical cancer.

### What DISADVANTAGES does it have?

**CONTRACTION METHOD**
- No serious side effects.

**PROGESTOGEN-ONLY PILL**
- Periods may stop, be irregular, light, or more frequent.

**COMBINED PILL**
- May be temporary side effects such as headaches and breast tenderness.

### Does it help protect from STIs?

**CONTRACTION METHOD**
- No.

**PROGESTOGEN-ONLY PILL**
- No.

**COMBINED PILL**
- No.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONTRACEPTIVE PATCH</th>
<th>VAGINAL RING</th>
<th>DIAPHRAGM or CAP with spermicide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 99% effective if used perfectly every time. Around 91% effective if not used perfectly.</td>
<td>Over 99% effective if used perfectly every time. Around 91% effective if not used perfectly.</td>
<td>92–96% effective, if used perfectly every time. 71-88% effective if not used perfectly.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It can make bleeds regular, lighter and less painful.</td>
<td>It can make bleeds regular, lighter and less painful.</td>
<td>Can be put in before sex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It's not affected if you vomit or have diarrhoea.</td>
<td>It's easy to put in and remove.</td>
<td>No serious side effects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be seen and may cause skin irritation.</td>
<td>Temporary side effects may include vaginal discharge, headaches, breast tenderness and mood changes.</td>
<td>Needs to stay in for 6 hours after sex.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rare, but serious side effects may include blood clots, breast and cervical cancer.</td>
<td>Rare, but serious side effects may include blood clots, breast and cervical cancer.</td>
<td>Extra spermicide is needed if you have sex again.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Most methods of contraception won’t protect you from sexually transmitted infections (STIs), so for safer sex, use a condom.

It can feel difficult to suggest using condoms – particularly if you aren’t sure how your partner feels about this or you haven't talked about it before. Perhaps you're worried they'll think it's a sign that you've had lots of partners – or that you think they've had lots of partners! Or they're...

...infected?

...a drug-user?

NOW?

NOW?

NOW?

too late!

But I thought you were on the pill!

Why didn’t you ask?!

Why didn’t you say?!

CONDOMS help protect from BOTH pregnancy and STIs. Condoms can help keep both you and your partner safe so you can relax and enjoy sex.
Condoms can be used on their own or with additional water-based lubricant (lube).

Most problems with condoms happen because people make mistakes when using them.

Be careful how you take it out of the packet – sharp fingernails and jewellery can tear the condom.

Put on a condom as soon as the penis is fully erect and before it touches a partner's genitals.

Find the teat or closed end and gently squeeze it to get rid of air. This will also help you to roll it on the right way round.

Condoms should be wrapped up and put in a bin, not down the toilet.

As soon as you've ejaculated, and before the penis has had time to go soft, hold the condom firmly in place while withdrawing. Do this slowly and carefully so no semen is spilt.

If you have sex again, use a new condom.

Never use massage oil, lipstick, or other oil-based products with a latex condom – they'll damage it. Water-based lubricants are OK with any type of condom.

If it won’t roll down then it’s probably on inside out. If so, start again with a new condom as sperm could now be on the first one.

Condoms can be used on their own or with additional water-based lubricant (lube).

Put on a condom as soon as the penis is fully erect and before it touches a partner's genitals.

If it won’t roll down then it’s probably on inside out. If so, start again with a new condom as sperm could now be on the first one.

Never use massage oil, lipstick, or other oil-based products with a latex condom – they'll damage it. Water-based lubricants are OK with any type of condom.

As soon as you've ejaculated, and before the penis has had time to go soft, hold the condom firmly in place while withdrawing. Do this slowly and carefully so no semen is spilt.

If you have sex again, use a new condom.

Condoms should be wrapped up and put in a bin, not down the toilet.
Today's condoms are very sensitive and there are lots of different types to try.

Pregnancy is much harder to hide than a packet of pills or condoms. A parent or carer may be relieved to know that you're sensible enough to use contraception.

A baby will be someone to love.

Being a parent is something to think long and hard about. You can have a baby in your 20s, 30s or 40s, but you can't be a teenager again.

So do babies! And lots of methods don't interfere with sex at all.

Some partners may have the best of intentions, but having a baby can put a huge strain on a relationship.

Condoms take all the pleasure away.

It can take a while to feel confident about using condoms. So practise using them.
SEX is exciting and it's very easy to get carried away, particularly when combined with alcohol or drugs.

'We’d been using condoms, but when you’ve drunk a bit, you just forget, don’t you?'

Emergency contraception can usually prevent pregnancy

IF you've had sex without using contraception, or think your method might've failed, there are different types of emergency contraception you can use.

- **An emergency IUD (intrauterine device)** can be fitted into the uterus (womb) within 5 days of sex or ovulation (release of an egg). This is the most effective type. It can also be used as ongoing contraception if you choose.

- **A pill with ulipristal acetate** can be taken up to 5 days (120 hours) after sex.

- **A pill with levonorgestrel** can be taken up to 3 days (72 hours) after sex.

YOU can get emergency contraception free from:

- a general practice
- a contraception clinic or a sexual health clinic
- a young people’s service or Brook clinic
- some GUM clinics
- some pharmacies
- most walk-in centres (England only)
- some minor injuries units (England only)
- some hospital accident and emergency departments (phone first to check).

Try and get emergency contraception as soon as possible after unprotected sex.
“I JUST couldn't ask Josh to use a condom. I was so thrilled that I'd got off with him after fancying him for ages. But then my period was late and I was just praying that I'd get it. In the end it was OK, but I'm not putting myself through that again.”
Ellie, 16

“I THOUGHT I couldn't be pregnant. I'd only had sex once and my periods had always been a bit irregular anyway. I thought if I ignored it everything would be alright. I didn't tell anyone I was pregnant until I was almost six months, by which time it was too late for an abortion. Now I'm a mum.”
Sophie, 16
IF your period's late then it's important to do a pregnancy test as soon as possible. You can have a free test done at:

• a contraception or sexual health clinic
• a young people's service or Brook clinic
• some GUM (genitourinary medicine) clinics
• some general practices.

A pharmacist will do a test but may charge you for it.

Or you can buy a test to use yourself.

IF you are pregnant then it's very important to get medical advice as quickly as possible, whether you want to continue with the pregnancy or talk about having an abortion or continuing with the pregnancy and choosing adoption.

It can be very difficult to cope with an unplanned pregnancy on your own, so do talk to someone.

This booklet can only give general information about contraception. If you're unsure about anything, ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist.

Get more information about contraception, unplanned pregnancy and abortion at www.sexwise.org.uk
WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

For information on sexual health, sex and relationships visit
www.sexwise.org.uk
or check out these FPA booklets.

These organisations can give you confidential information and advice.

BROOK
www.brook.org.uk
Free and confidential sexual health services for people under 25.

CHILDLINE
0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk
Confidential service for people under 19, where you can talk about anything.

BEAT
www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk
Support for anyone affected by eating disorders.

FRANK
www.talktofrank.com
Honest information on drugs.

RAPE CRISIS
www.rapecrisis.org.uk
For girls and women who’ve been raped or assaulted recently or in the past.

SWITCHBOARD
– the LGBT+ helpline
0300 330 0630
www.switchboard.lgbt
Support and information for gay men, lesbians, and bisexual and trans people.

THE MIX
0808 808 4994
www.themix.org.uk
Free, confidential information and support for people under 25.

YOUTH ACCESS
www.youthaccess.org.uk
Find counselling, advice and information services near you.

Avoid people and situations that might make you want to smoke.
Friends may try to tempt you back so they feel better.

For information on sexual health, sex and relationships visit
www.sexwise.org.uk
or check out these FPA booklets.

These organisations can give you confidential information and advice.

BROOK
www.brook.org.uk
Free and confidential sexual health services for people under 25.

CHILDLINE
0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk
Confidential service for people under 19, where you can talk about anything.

BEAT
www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk
Support for anyone affected by eating disorders.

FRANK
www.talktofrank.com
Honest information on drugs.

RAPE CRISIS
www.rapecrisis.org.uk
For girls and women who’ve been raped or assaulted recently or in the past.

SWITCHBOARD
– the LGBT+ helpline
0300 330 0630
www.switchboard.lgbt
Support and information for gay men, lesbians, and bisexual and trans people.

THE MIX
0808 808 4994
www.themix.org.uk
Free, confidential information and support for people under 25.

YOUTH ACCESS
www.youthaccess.org.uk
Find counselling, advice and information services near you.