

Barrier Birth Control Methods

This decision aid is to help you and your health care provider talk about methods of birth control and choose what's right for you. Most people can safely use these methods. Your health care provider can tell you whether these methods are safe for you.



	MALE CONDOM	FEMALE CONDOM	SPERMICIDE	SPONGE	CERVICAL CAP (with spermicide)	DIAPHRAGM (with spermicide)
How is it used?	A thin latex or polyurethane sleeve is put on the erect penis before sex	You put a thin sleeve in your vagina before sex	You put a foam, cream, gel, film, or suppository in your vagina before sex	You put a round foam device (that already contains spermicide) in your vagina before sex	You put a silicone-rubber device in your vagina, with a spermicide, before sex	You put a latex or silicone device in your vagina, with a spermicide, before sex
How often?	Every time you have sex	Every time you have sex	Every time you have sex	Every time you have sex	Every time you have sex	Every time you have sex
How does it work?	Prevents sperm from reaching an egg	Prevents sperm from reaching an egg	Prevents sperm from reaching an egg	Prevents sperm from reaching an egg	Prevents sperm from reaching an egg	Prevents sperm from reaching an egg
When does it start working?	Immediately	Immediately	Depends on the brand	Immediately	Immediately	Immediately
How many people become pregnant in the first year?						
Not always following the instructions:	18 in 100 people ●●○○○○○○○○	21 in 100 people ●●●○○○○○○○	28 in 100 people ●●●○○○○○○○	12 in 100 people (if never given birth) ●●○○○○○○○○ 24 in 100 people (if given birth) ●●●○○○○○○○	14 in 100 people (if never given birth vaginally) ●●○○○○○○○○ 29 in 100 people (if given birth vaginally) ●●●○○○○○○○	12 in 100 people ●●○○○○○○○○
Always following the instructions:	2 in 100 people ●○○○○○○○○○	5 in 100 people ●○○○○○○○○○	18 in 100 people ●●○○○○○○○○	9 in 100 people (if never given birth) ●○○○○○○○○○ 20 in 100 people (if given birth) ●●●○○○○○○○	<i>No information available</i>	6 in 100 people ●○○○○○○○○○
What are some of the side effects?						
Allergic reaction?	Possible	Possible	Possible	Possible	Possible	Possible
Vaginal symptoms (e.g., odor, irritation, infection, vaginitis)?			Possible	Possible	Possible	Possible
Toxic shock syndrome?				Possible	Possible	Possible
Does it protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)?	Provides the best protection	Provides some protection	No	No	No	No

This decision aid is for use only during a visit with your health care provider. It is not intended to give you medical advice or recommend a birth control method. For more information, including authors, information sources, and terms of use, see www.rightforme.org/decision

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