

Natural 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.



	FERTILITY AWARENESS METHODS:				
	WITHDRAWAL METHOD	STANDARD DAYS METHOD®	TWODAY METHOD®	OVULATION METHOD	SYMPTOTHERMAL METHOD
How is it used?	During sex, the penis is removed from your vagina and away from your genitals before ejaculation ¹	You monitor the days of your menstrual cycle ² . You avoid sex on days 8 through 19 of your cycle ^{3,4} .	You monitor your cervical secretions ^{3,4} . You avoid sex on days you notice secretions and for one day after ⁴ .	You monitor your cervical secretions ^{3,4} . You use a set of rules to know what days to avoid sex ² .	You monitor your cervical secretions and your body temperature ³ . You use a set of rules to know what days to avoid sex ² .
How often?	Every time you have sex ¹	Every day ²	Every day (checking your secretions two or more times a day) ⁴	Every day ²	Every day ⁴
How does it work?	Prevents sperm from reaching an egg ¹	Prevents sperm from reaching an egg when there is a higher chance of pregnancy ²	Prevents sperm from reaching an egg when there is a higher chance of pregnancy ²	Prevents sperm from reaching an egg when there is a higher chance of pregnancy ²	Prevents sperm from reaching an egg when there is a higher chance of pregnancy ²
When does it start working?	Immediately ¹	You can start monitoring the days of your menstrual cycle anytime ² . It may take time before it is a 'safe day' to have sex ² .	You can start monitoring your cervical secretions anytime ² . It may take time before it is a 'safe day' to have sex ² .	You can start monitoring your cervical secretions anytime ² . It may take time before it is a 'safe day' to have sex ² .	You can start monitoring your cervical secretions and your body temperature anytime ² . It may take time before it is a 'safe day' to have sex ² .
How many people become pregnant in the first year?					
Not always following the instructions:	22 in 100 people ³ ●●●○○○○○○○	24 in 100 people ³ ●●●○○○○○○○	24 in 100 people ³ ●●●○○○○○○○	24 in 100 people ³ ●●●○○○○○○○	24 in 100 people ³ ●●●○○○○○○○
Always following the instructions:	4 in 100 people ³ ●○○○○○○○○○	5 in 100 people ³ ●○○○○○○○○○	4 in 100 people ³ ●○○○○○○○○○	3 in 100 people ³ ●○○○○○○○○○	Fewer than 1 in 100 people ³ ○○○○○○○○○
Are there side effects?	No ²	No ²	No ²	No ²	No ²
Does it protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)?	No ⁵	No ⁵	No ⁵	No ⁵	No ⁵

Note. The Lactational Amenorrhea Method is another natural birth control method that may be used by some people who are breastfeeding³. Your health care provider can tell you about this method.

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

Version 1.1



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Supporting Document

Version: 1.1

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The authors do not stand to gain or lose anything by the birth control choices people make after using this decision aid

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Notes:

- This decision aid includes a statement about the general safety of the birth control methods described. The *U.S. Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use*^{6,7} and published updates^{6,7} provide guidance on who can safely use each birth control method and may be used to facilitate the provision of individualized information on method safety.
- This decision aid describes four fertility awareness methods. The information in this decision aid may be supplemented with counseling about other fertility awareness methods and their variants. The information in this decision aid may also be supplemented with counseling about the possibility of using a fertility awareness method in combination with another contraceptive method (e.g., using a barrier contraceptive method rather than abstaining from sex during the fertile period).
- This decision aid does not describe the Lactational Amenorrhea Method due to its relevance to only a small subpopulation of patients.
- For the Standard Days Method®, the TwoDay Method®, the Ovulation Method, and the Sympto-thermal Method, 12-month typical-use effectiveness data are for fertility awareness methods in general.
- To enhance comprehension, 12-month typical-use and perfect-use effectiveness data are displayed both using raw numbers ("X in 100 people") and using a visual aid based on the following:
 - Less than 1%: ○○○○○○○○○○
 - 1% to 9%: ●○○○○○○○○○
 - 10% to 19%: ●●○○○○○○○
 - 20% to 29%: ●●●○○○○○○○

Information Sources:

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7. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Update to CDC's U.S. Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use, 2010: Revised Recommendations for the Use of Hormonal Contraception Among Women at High Risk for HIV Infection or Infected with HIV. *MMWR.* 2012;61(24):449-452. <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6124a4.htm>.