



Your
Body

Your
Contraception

Your
Choice

A one stop guide
to contraception and
what to expect if it fails



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Your **CONTRACEPTIVES** made easy



Contraception Types

Physical Contraceptives

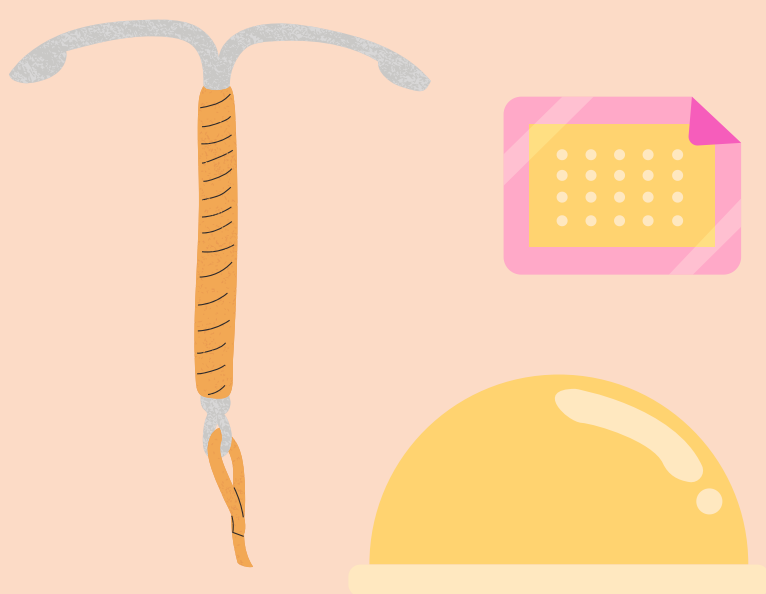
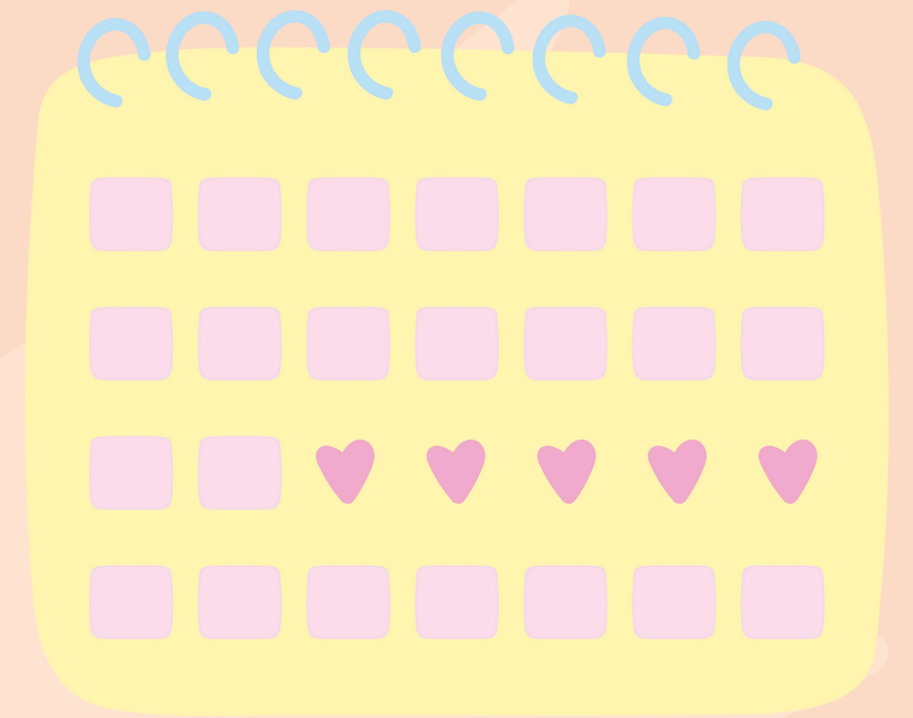
- Condoms
- Glyde Dams
- Internal Condoms

Hormonal Contraceptives

- Combination Pill
- Progesterone Only pill
- IUD
- Copper Coil
- Implant
- Patch
- Injection
- Diaphragm
- Vaginal Ring

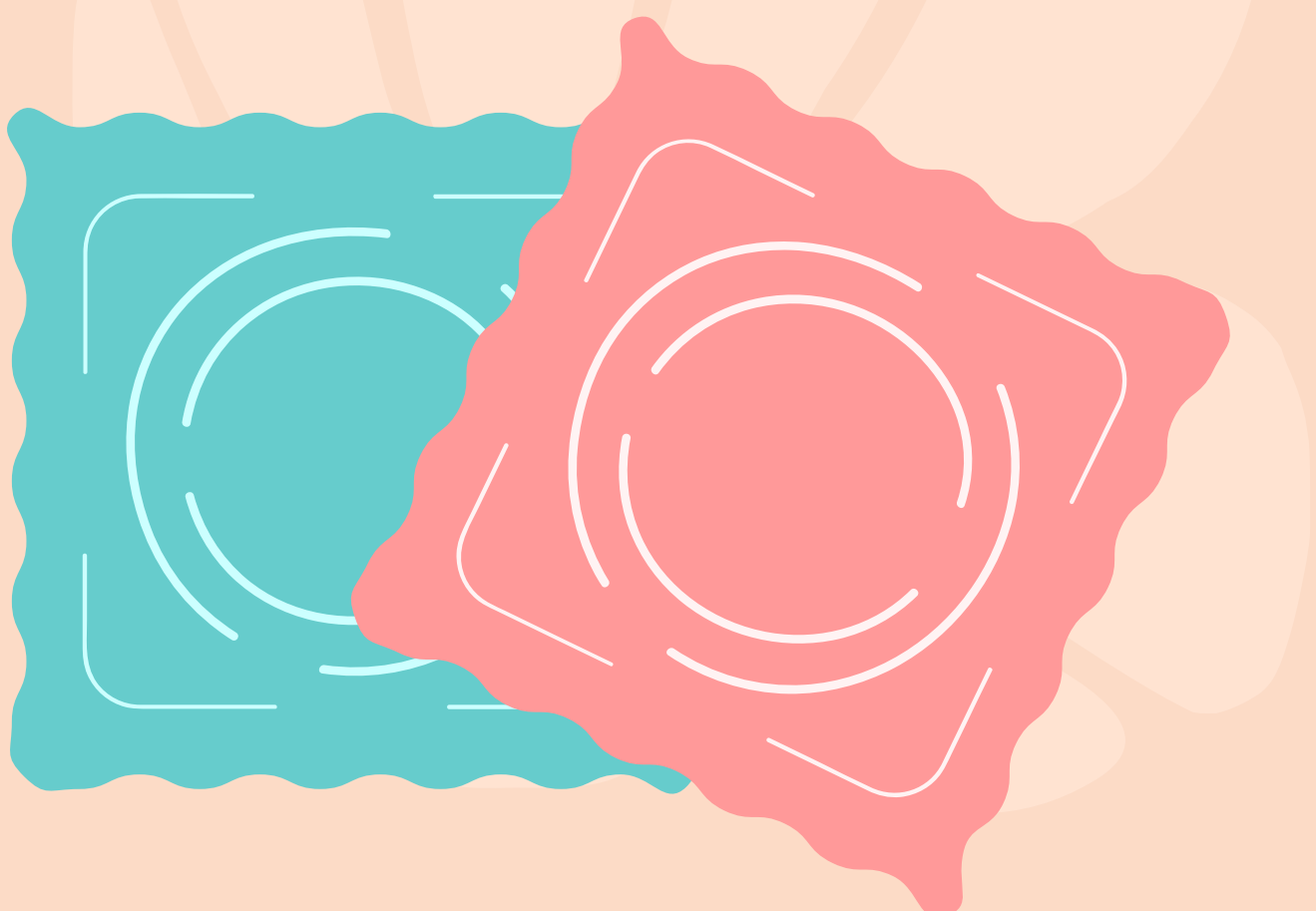
Other Contraceptives

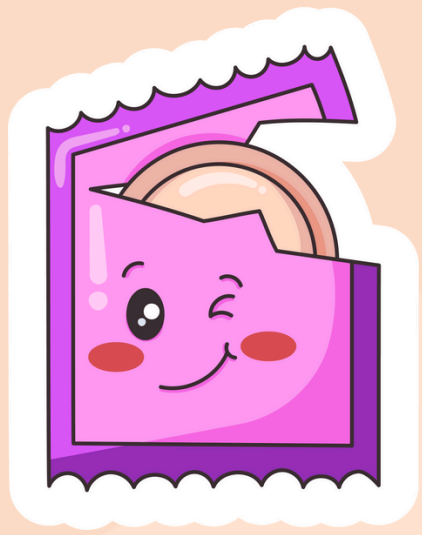
- Spermicide
- Emergency Contraception
- Pull Out method
- Cycle Tracking





Physical CONTRACEPTIVES





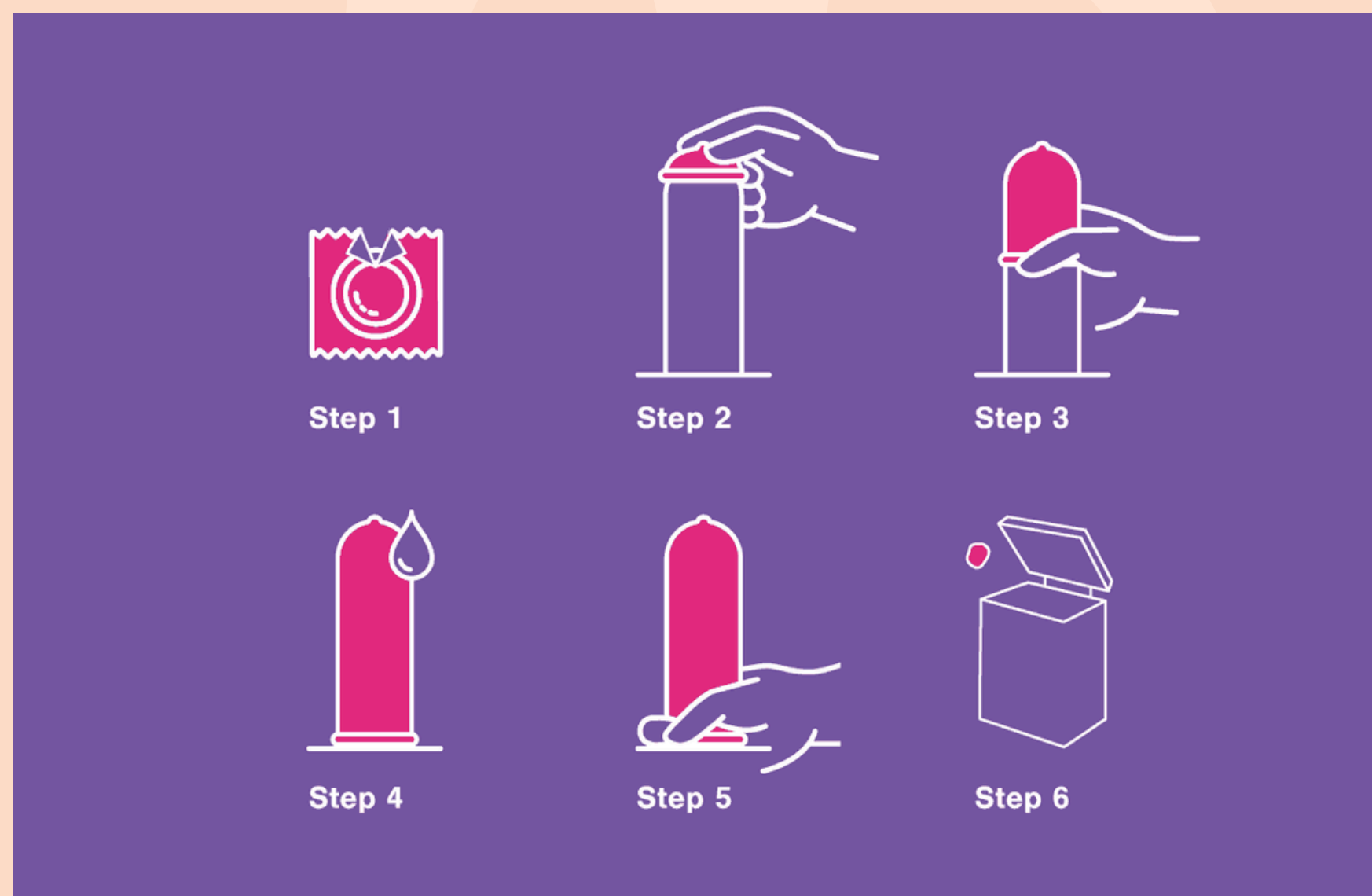
Condoms

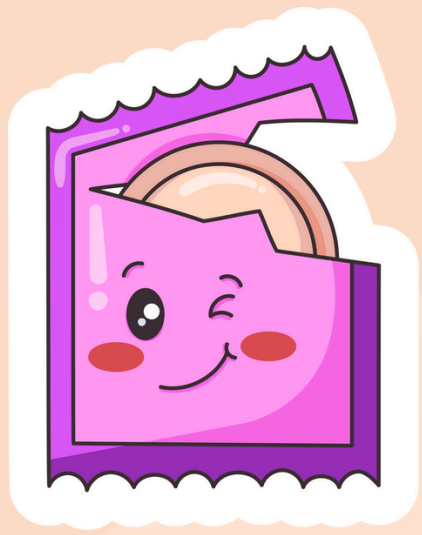
How effective is it?

- Condoms are 98% effective when the correct method of application, usage and removal is applied.

How to use

- Check that the condom foil is sealed, within the expiry date, and that it carries the CE and Kitemark.
- Carefully open the top of the packet at the jagged edge. Be careful not to damage the condom when opening the packet. Do not use teeth or sharp implements. Be careful opening the packet if you have long nails or jewellery.
- Make sure that condom is the right way up (the roll needs to be on the outside). If it won't roll down the condom might be on the wrong way. Take it off and start again with a new condom.
- Hold the tip of the condom between your thumb and finger, unrolling the condom down the entire length of the erect penis.
- After sex, withdraw the penis while it is still erect, holding the base of the condom. Be careful not to spill any semen.
- Place the used condom in a waste bin. Do not flush it down the toilet.
- You should only use silicone or water-based lubricant with latex products.

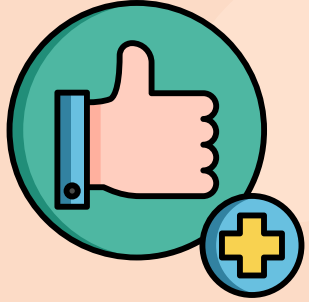




Condoms

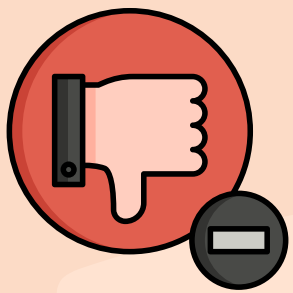


Advantages



- Pregnancy prevention
- Prevents the transmission of STIs
- No hormonal side effects
- Accessible (free to deliver nationwide via the GOSHH website)
- Easy to use

Disadvantages



- Potential for breakage & failure- ensure to check date and condom integrity.
- Possible reduction of sensitivity
- Can cause irritation if latex allergy is present. (Good news, latex-free condoms are also available from GOSHH - please email reception@goshh.ie for more information).

Overcoming Disadvantages

Ensure your condom doesn't break by

- Never using an expired condom.
- Never use oil-based lubricants as they can break down latex condoms. Do not use ANY oil-based products such as vegetable oil, Vaseline, baby oil, etc.
- Never store your condom in a warm place, such as your wallet.
- Don't double up on condoms - the added friction could lead to the condom breaking.
- Never Reuse a condom.

Overcome sensitivity reduction by experimenting with different lubricants such as tingle lube, or ribbed condoms!



Condoms



Myths!

“Two condoms are better than one.”

Double layering causes friction and leads to condom breakage. Wearing one condom correctly is safest practice.

“You can use anything as lubricant”

Using other substances such as baby oil or vaseline will compromise the condom and will lead to breakage. Water-based lubricant is usually the best option when using latex condoms.

“You don’t need condoms for oral or anal sex”

You can still contract an STI through oral or anal sex, in fact you are more likely to contract an STI anally than orally or vaginally. This is because the lining of the anus is thin and can easily be damaged, which makes it more vulnerable to infection.





How effective is it?

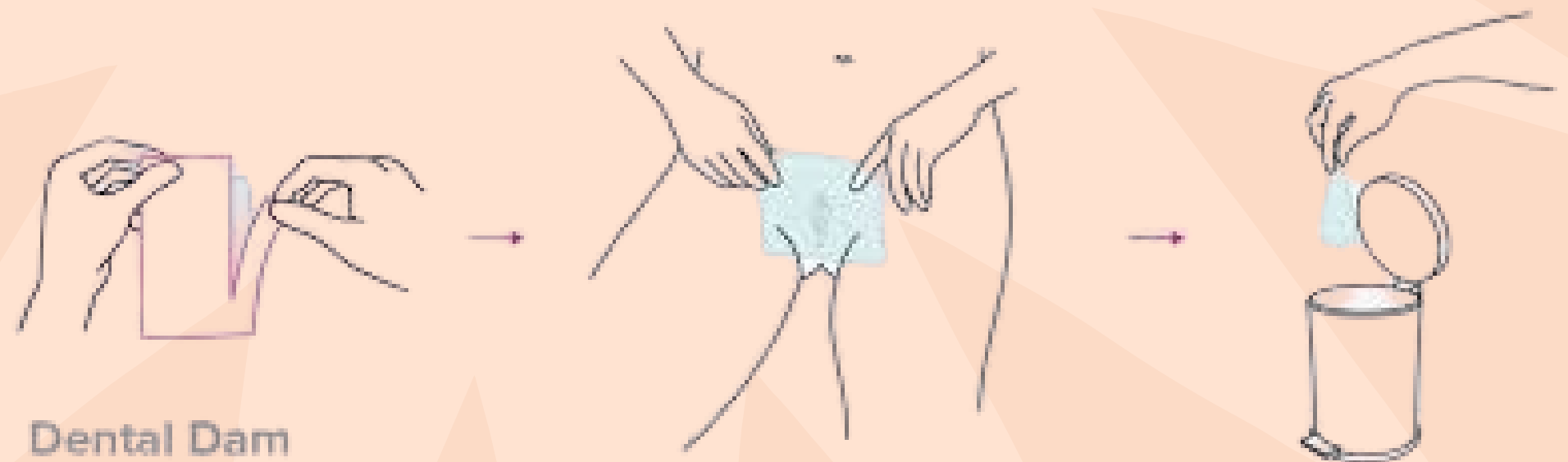
- Glyde dams can be an effective barrier for protecting against STIS that may be contracted during oral sex involving genitals or anus. However, glyde dams do not prevent pregnancy and should not be used as such.

How to use:

1. Check dam is wrapped and in date.
2. Use a water-based lubricant to secure the dam over the anus or vagina, pull taut to prevent skin to skin contact.
3. Only use one side of the dam for oral sex, do not flip it over.
4. NEVER reuse a dam.
5. Wrap dam in tissue and safely dispose of it in a bin.



Myths

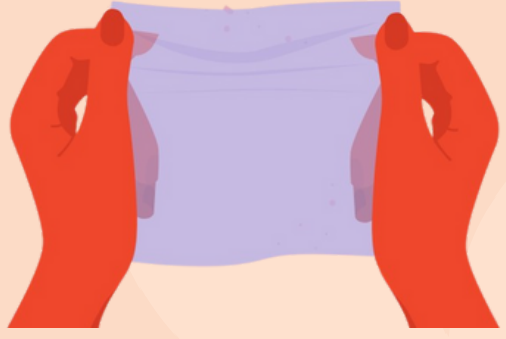


“Dental dams kill the mood or feel bad”

Like condoms, Dental Dams can be made more enjoyable by using flavoured types and flavoured lubricants.

“You can use cling film instead”

Cling film may have microscopic spores that allow STI's to pass through, making it ineffective as protection.



Glyde Dams

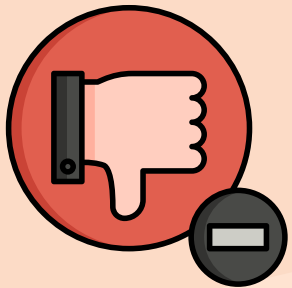


Advantages

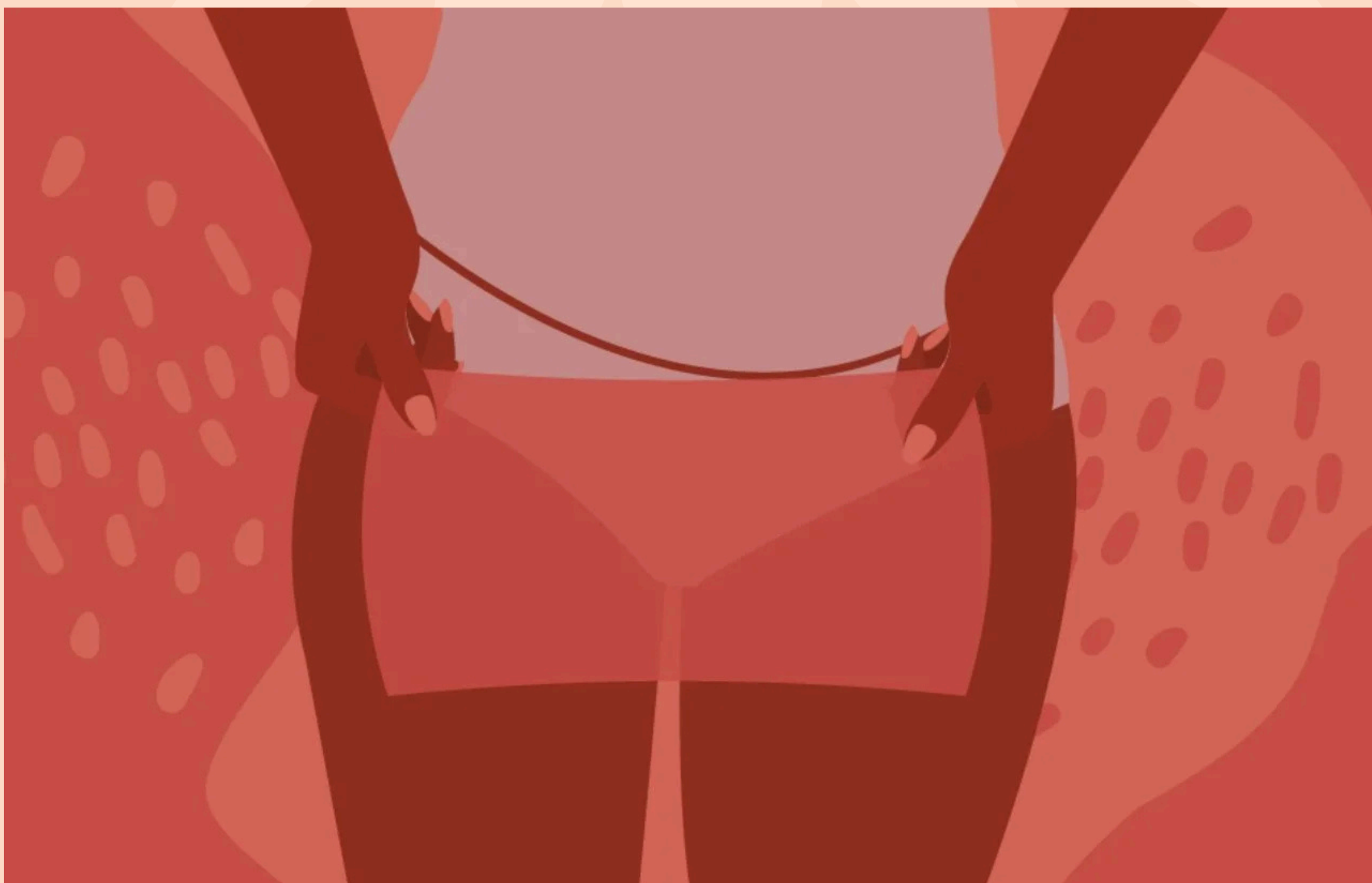


- Prevents the transmission of STIs.
- No hormonal side effects.
- Accessible (free to deliver nationwide via GOSHH website).
- Easy to use.

Disadvantages



- No protection against pregnancy.
- Can be expensive.
- Potential for slippage.
- Potential for irritation.

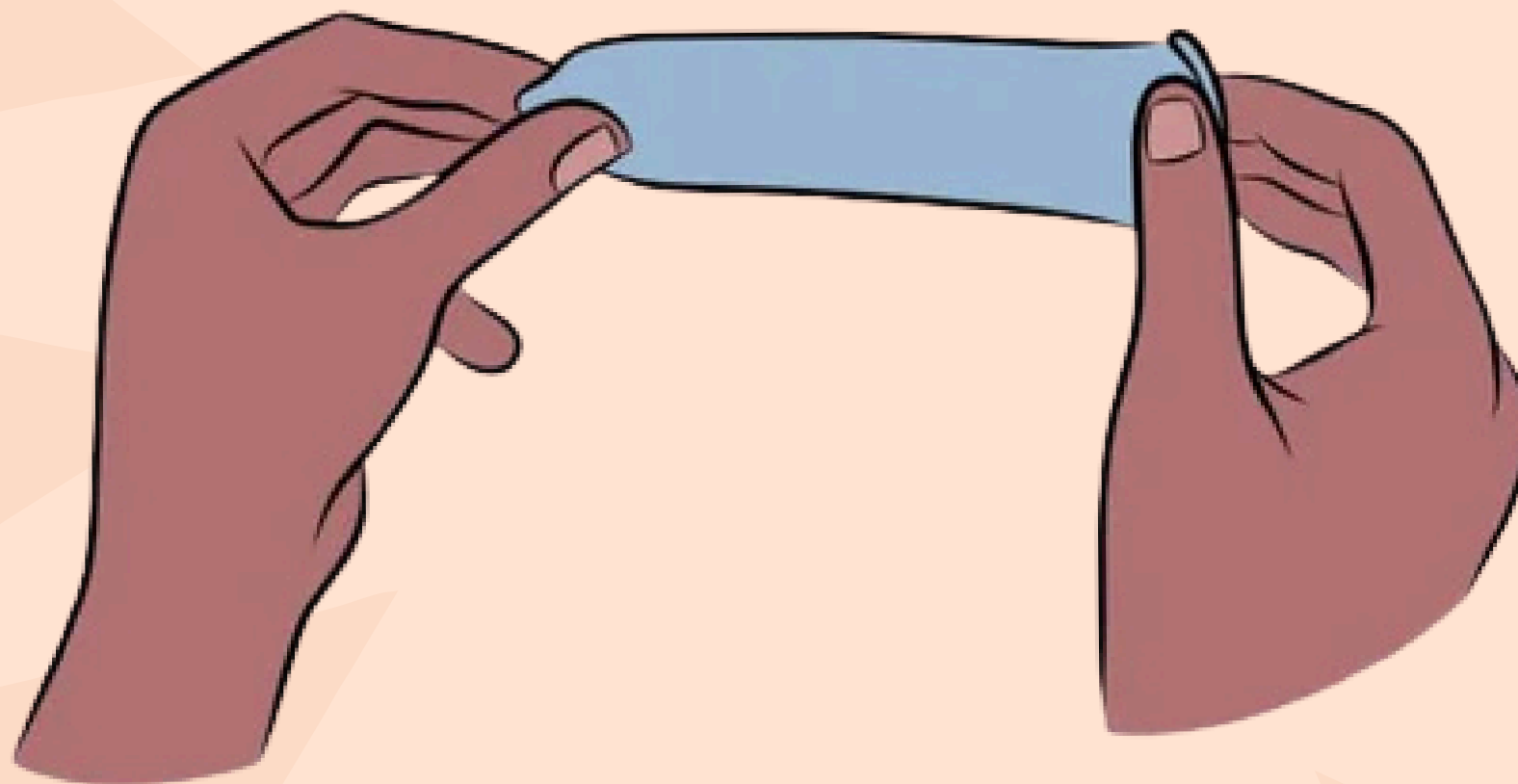




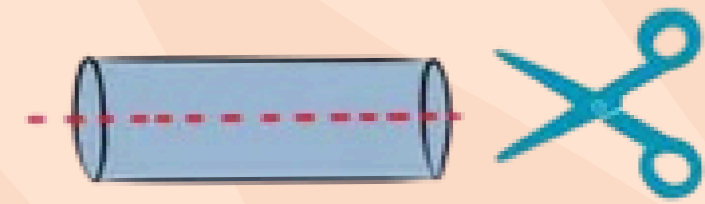
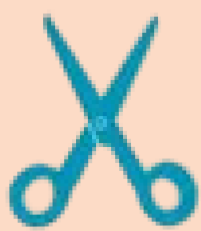
How do i make a glyde dam out of a condom?

1. Take an in-date condom with the CE and Kite mark.
2. Cut the top off of the condom.
3. Cut the rolled rubber end off of the condom.
4. Cut down the length of the condom on one side.
5. Unroll the condom and use as you would a regular dam.

1.



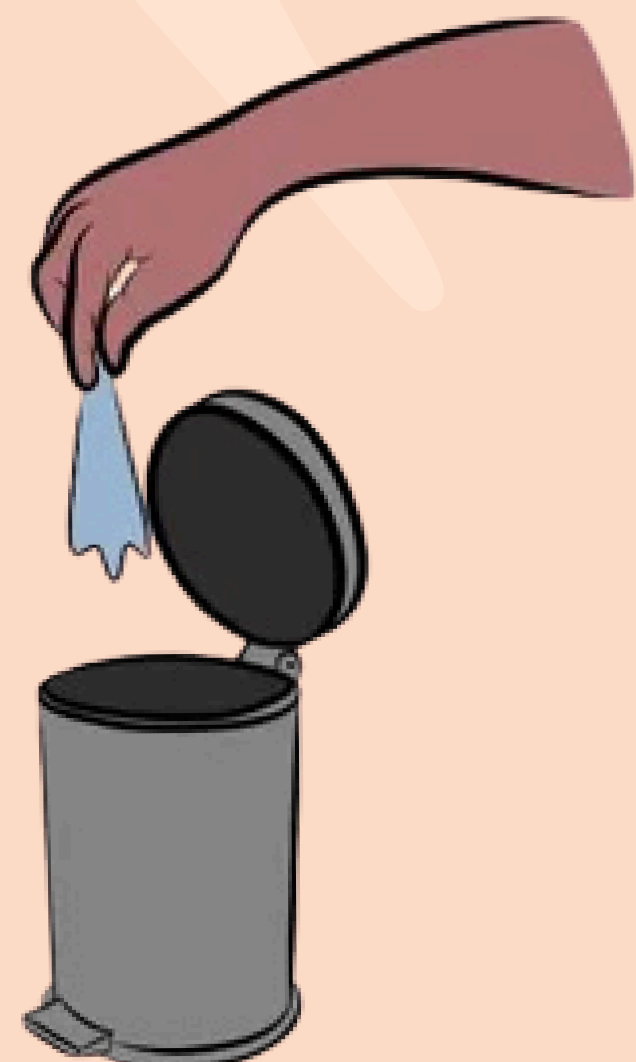
2.



3.



4.



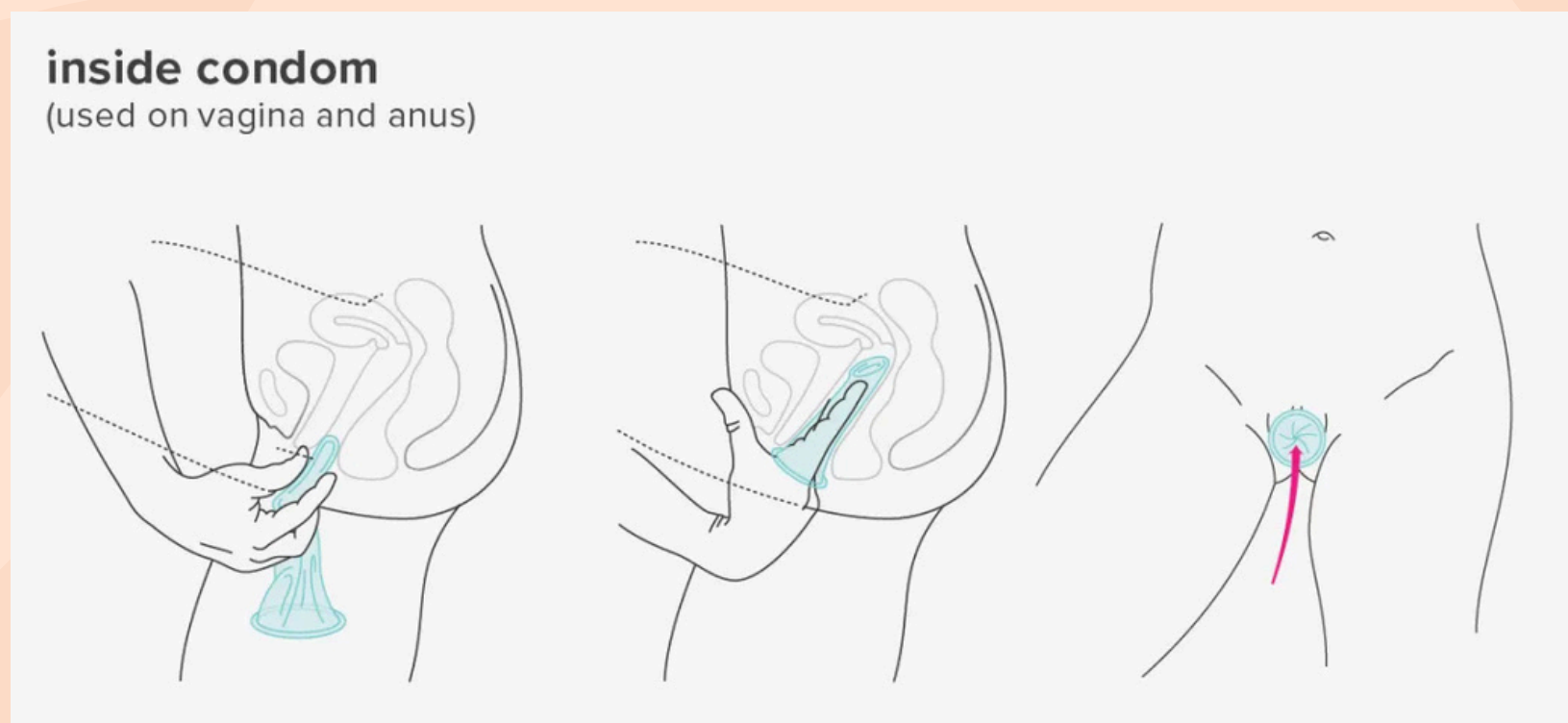


How effective is it?

- Internal condoms are 95% effective when used on their own correctly.

How to use:

1. Check the packet and open carefully.
2. Hold the inner ring and insert the condom into the vagina.
3. Put a finger into the condom and push it as far into the vagina as you can.
4. Make sure the outer ring stays outside the vagina.
5. During sex, make sure the penis/toys/fingers go inside the condom.
6. If being used for anal sex, you can insert it into the anus using your finger, or by putting it on the penis or a sex toy like an external (standard) condom.
7. If being used anally, you may remove the internal ring but please ensure that the condom does not become damaged as a result.
8. Make sure to safely dispose of the condom after use, twisting the external ring to keep sperm and fluids inside.



Myths

“Only women can use internal condoms”

Internal condoms are for vaginal and anal use and can be used by anyone regardless of Gender.

“Partners won’t accept them”

Many partners are happy to use internal condoms as they can offer increased sensation, don’t rely on erections and can be inserted ahead of time.



Internal Condoms

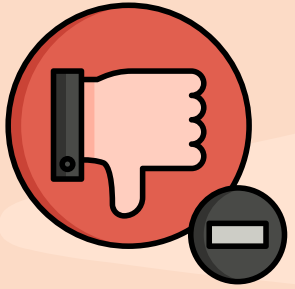


Advantages



- Prevents the transmission of STIs.
- Prevents pregnancy.
- Can be inserted in advance.
- No hormones.
- Good for those with a latex allergy.

Disadvantages



- Slightly higher failure rate than external condoms due to the need for correct and consistent use.
- Some users report internal condoms can be noisier than external condoms during sex.
- They can be more discreet as they can be inserted in advance.
- Can be more expensive.



Diaphragm



How effective is it?

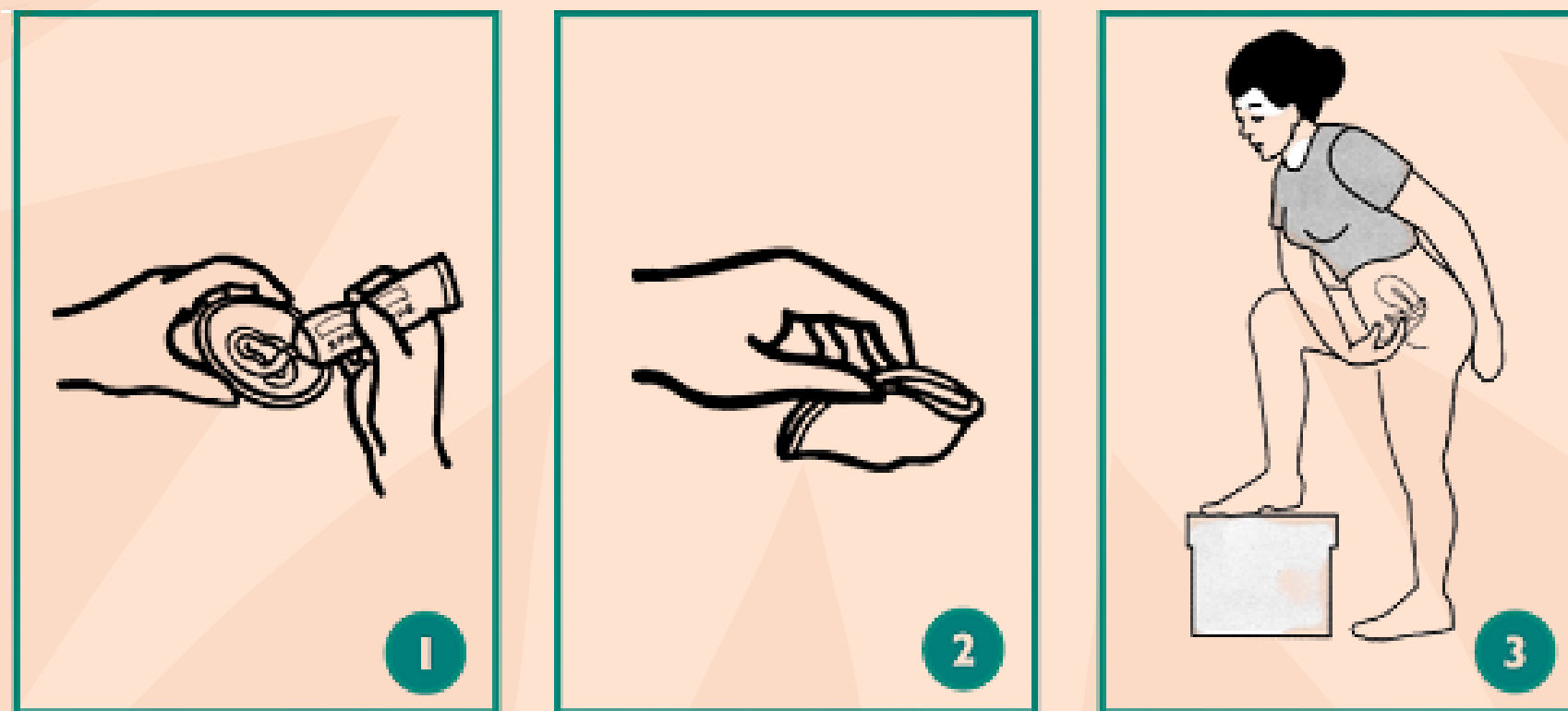
The diaphragm is a soft silicone cap that gets inserted into the vagina to cover the cervix. A diaphragm is 92%-96% effective when used correctly with spermicide.

How to use:

1. Check Diaphragm for holes or wear and tear each time you use it.
2. Check spermicide is in date and apply to the inside of the cap.
3. Put the diaphragm or cap in your vagina up to 3 hours before sex, making sure it fits over your cervix.
4. Reapply spermicide to the diaphragm every 3 hours until you have sex.
5. Leave the Diaphragm in for 6 hours after sex.
6. Remove the Diaphragm after 6 hours and wash with soap and water.
7. Dry Diaphragm and keep in container in cool, dry place.



Myths



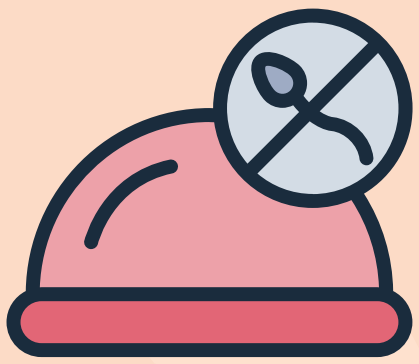
“You can leave a Diaphragm in for a weekend.”

A Diaphragm should never be kept in for more than 30 hours at a time.

“A diaphragm will protect me against sti’s”

A diaphragm will not stop you from contracting STIs and is only effective in preventing pregnancy.





Diaphragm

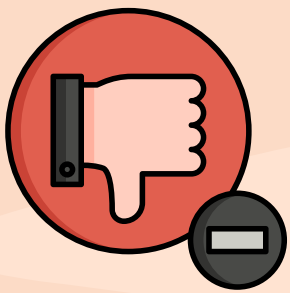


Advantages



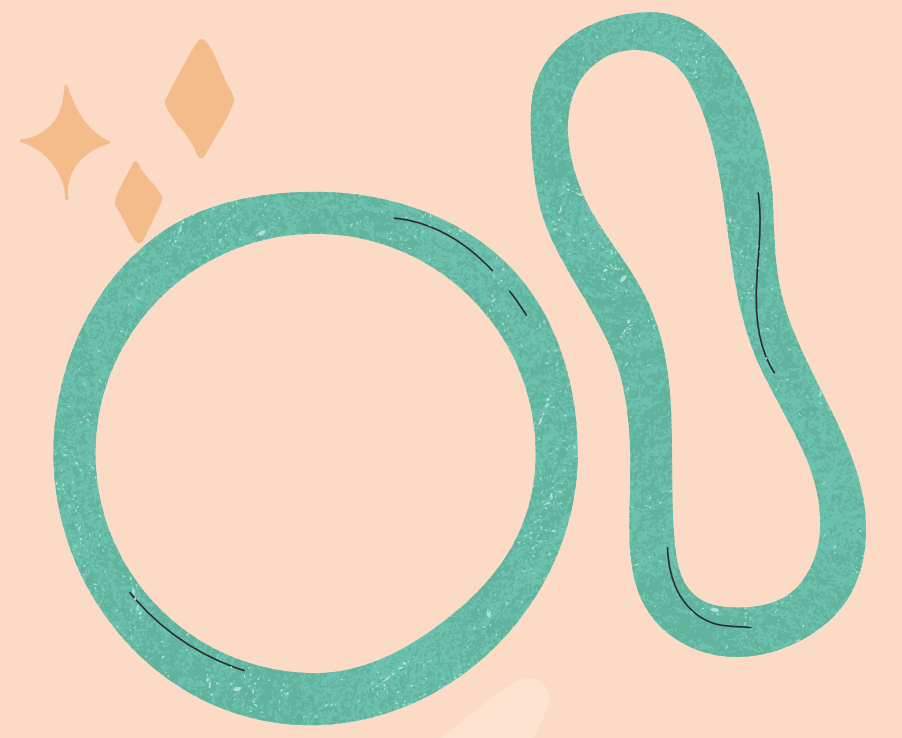
- Non-hormonal
- Re-usable: they can be cleaned and re-used for several years
- Effective immediately
- Convenient as they can be inserted up to two hours before use
- Inexpensive option as they are re-usable

Disadvantages

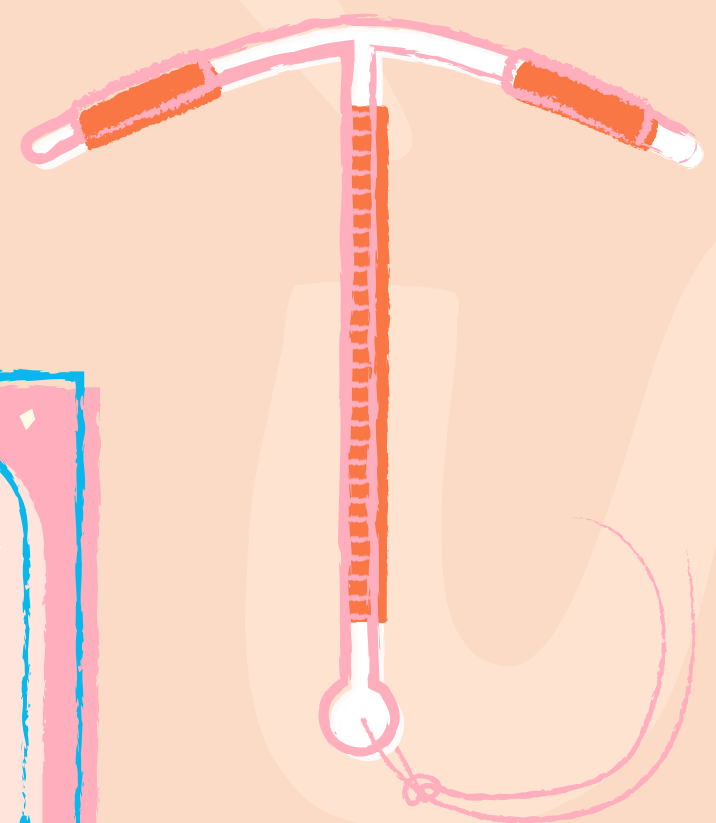
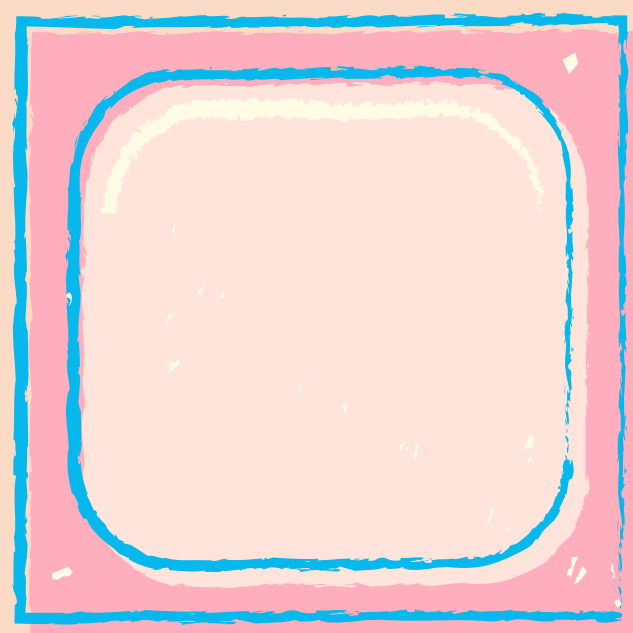
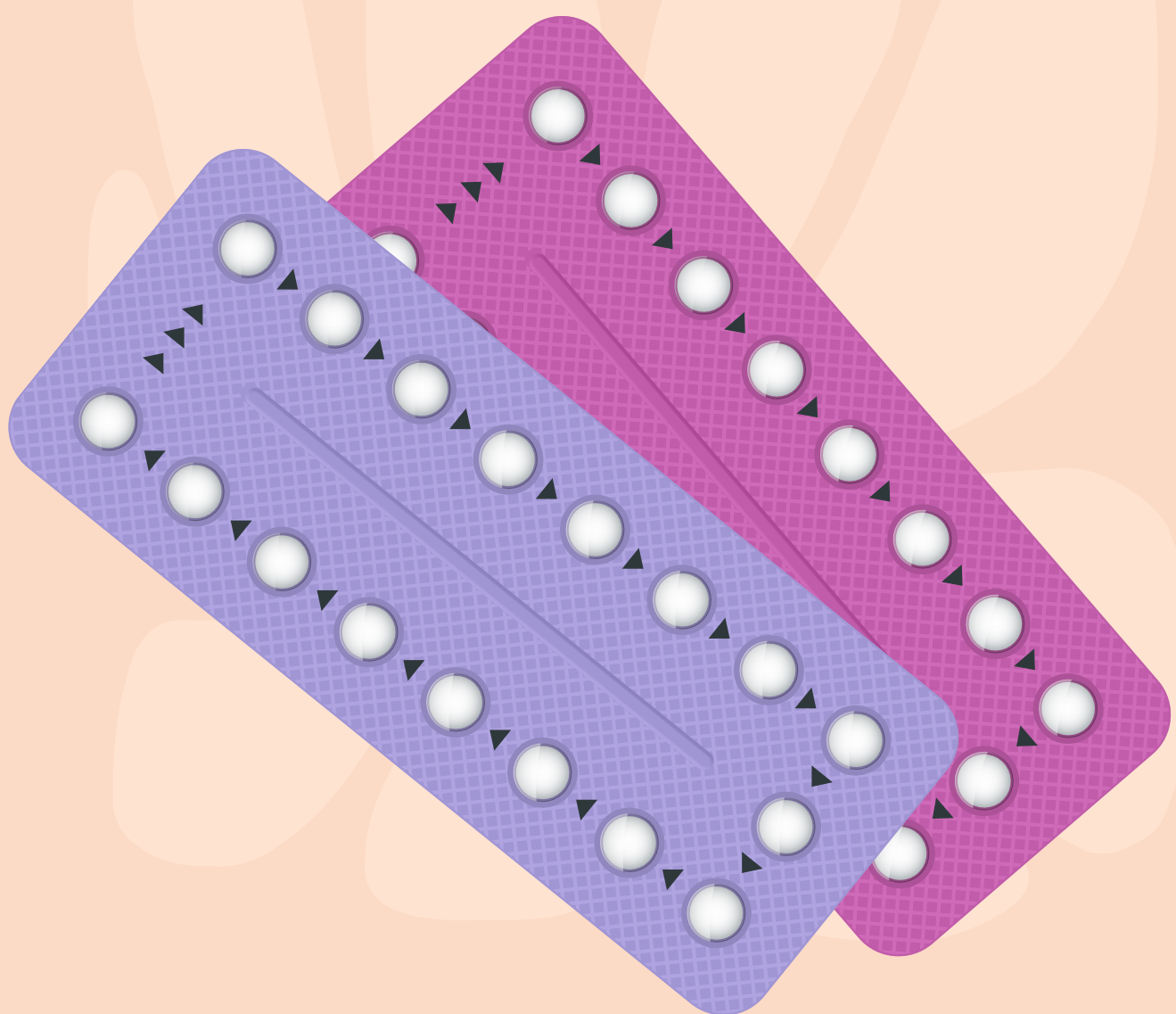


- Increased risk of UTI's
- Don't protect against STIs
- Spermicide required can be messy
- Using them during your period can increase risk of toxic shock syndrome
- Needs to be changed every 1-2 years
- Can need refitting in cases of changes in weight, pregnancy or pelvic surgery

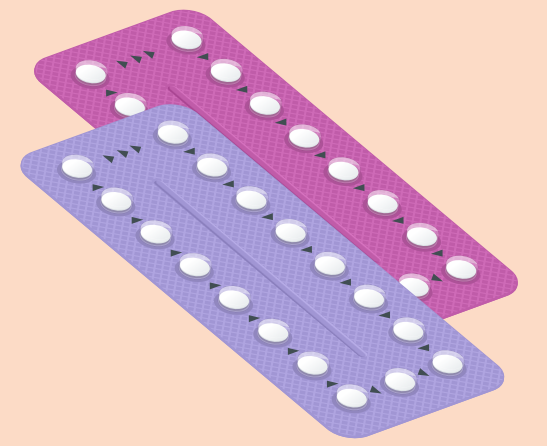




Hormonal CONTRACEPTIVES



Combination Pill



Some Brand Names:

Yasmin, Ovreea, Azurette, Yasminelle, Dianette, Ovranette.

How effective is it?

With perfect use the combined oral contraceptive pill is over 99% effective. The pill is over 91% effective if the correct method is not consistently used.

How it works:

The combined contraceptive pill is a tablet that contains artificial versions of the two female hormones, oestrogen and progestogen. You need to take the pill at around the same time each day.

The Pill stops ovulation (an egg being released from the ovaries) occurring. Mucus of the uterus thickens, this makes it difficult for sperm to enter. It also causes thinning of the lining of the womb, this prevents a fertilised egg from implanting in the womb.

How to use:

- If you start taking the pill in the first 5 days of your cycle (day 1 is the first day of your period), you will be protected from pregnancy straight away.
- If you start taking the pill more than 5 days after the start of your period, you will not be protected from pregnancy straight away.
- You'll need to use another type of contraception, such as condoms, until you've taken the pill for 7 days.
- Best practice is to take your pill at the same time every day; however, taking your pill within 12 hours will retain its effectiveness.
- If you intend to take a break, the break should only be four days long, at the end of your pack. You do not need to take a break every 21 days, and can continue to take pill packs consecutively without it affecting your health. Talk to your healthcare provider for more information.

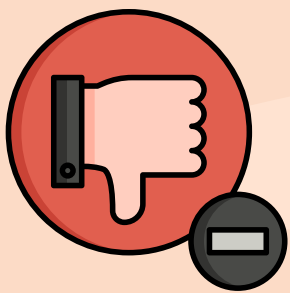
Combination Pill

Advantages



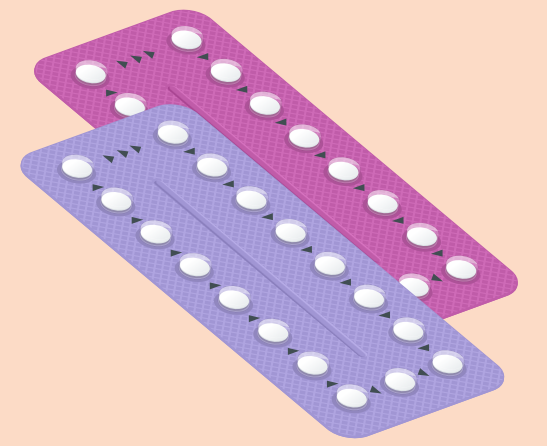
- Can be known to lighten your periods and make them more regular
- Possibility of improving acne
- Can improve symptoms of PCOS and endometriosis
- The pill offers you the control to delay or stop your periods

Disadvantages



- Doesn't protect against STIs
- Can stop working due to certain medications or gastrointestinal illnesses
- Requires consistent use without missing any pills
- Many women report side effects of migraines, cramps, spotting and more





What can prevent my pill working?

- Missing a pill - use condoms for the rest of the pack if you have missed a pill. Continue taking your pill as normal.
- Vomiting within 2-3 hours of taking your pill.
- Diarrhoea after taking your pill.
- Antibiotic rifampin (used for TB)
- Some anti-seizure meds (like carbamazepine, phenytoin)
- HIV meds
- St. John's Wort (a herbal antidepressant)



Myths

"You must get your period every month."

Your 'period' on the pill is actually a withdrawal bleed from stopping hormones for 4 days. As you are not ovulating you cannot have a period. You can safely take no break from your pill.

"The pill is only for preventing pregnancy."

The pill is effective for preventing pregnancy, however it also helps with

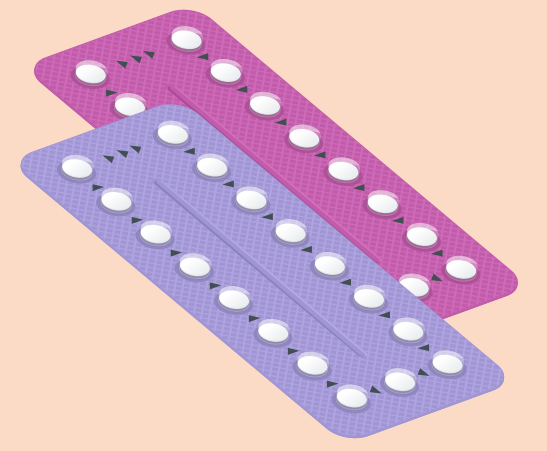
-Acne, regulating periods, and managing Endometriosis or PCOS symptoms.

It protects against STI's "

The pill will not protect you from contracting STI's, only a cond



Progesterone Pill



Some Brand names:

Also known as 'Mini Pill'- Cerazette, Norgeston, Noriday

How effective is it?

With perfect use the combined oral contraceptive pill is over 99% effective. The pill is over 91% effective if the correct method is not consistently used.

How it works:

The Progesterone pill works in the same way as the combined pill by stopping ovulation, thickening mucus at the uterus, and thinning the lining of the womb.

How to use:

- If you start taking the pill in the first 5 days of your cycle (day 1 is the first day of your period), you will be protected from pregnancy straight away.
- If you start taking the pill more than 5 days after the start of your period, you will not be protected from pregnancy straight away.
- You'll need to use another type of contraception, such as condoms, until you've taken the pill for 7 days.
- Best practice is to take your pill at the same time every day; however, taking your pill within 3 hours should retain its effectiveness.
- You do not take a break on the mini pill. Packs should be taken consecutively.



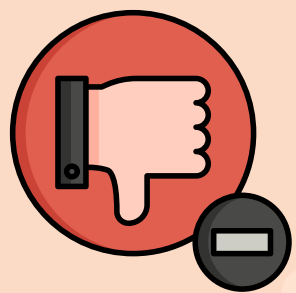
Progesterone Pill

Advantages



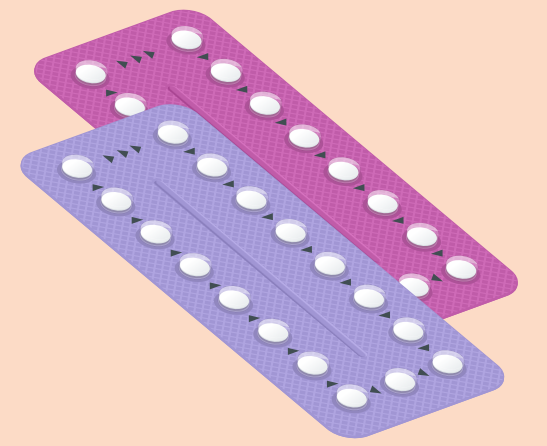
- Can be known to lighten your periods and make them more regular
- Possibility of improving acne
- Can improve symptoms of PCOS and endometriosis
- The pill offers you control to stop your periods
- Fewer side effects than the combination pill
- Suitable for breastfeeding
- No Estrogen—suitable for people who cannot take contraceptives with Estrogen due to health conditions or are over 35 and smokers
- Less impact on sex drive

Disadvantages



- Doesn't protect against STI's
- Can stop working due to certain medications or gastrointestinal illnesses
- Requires consistent use without missing any pills
- Potential for weight gain
- Higher risk of ovarian cysts





What can prevent my pill working?

- Missing a pill - use condoms for the rest of the pack if you have missed a pill. Continue taking your pill as normal.
- Vomiting within 2-3 hours of taking your pill.
- Diarrhoea after taking your pill.
- Antibiotic rifampin (used for TB)
- Some anti-seizure meds (like carbamazepine, phenytoin)
- HIV meds
- St. John's Wort (a herbal antidepressant)
- Taking it more than 3 hours late



Myths

"You must get your period every month."

Your 'period' on the pill is actually a withdrawal bleed from stopping hormones for 4 days. As you are not ovulating you cannot have a period. You can safely take no break from your pill.

"The pill is only for preventing pregnancy."

The pill is effective for preventing pregnancy, however it also helps with

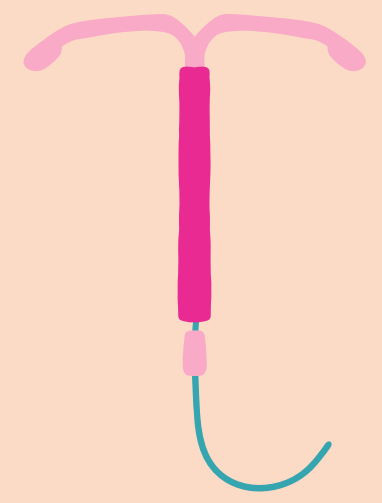
-Acne, regulating periods, and managing Endometriosis or PCOS symptoms.

"It protects against STI's"

The pill will never protect you against STI's, only condoms will do that.



IUD/ IUS



Some Brand names:

- Mirena, Kyleena, Jaydess

How effective is it?

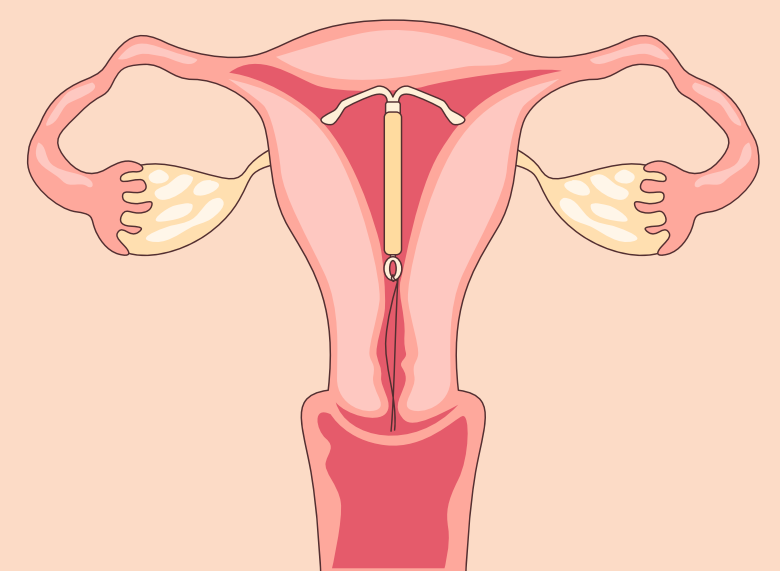
- The IUD, also known as the 'Coil' is over 99% effective at preventing pregnancy.

How it works:

- The Coil works by releasing a hormone called 'progesterone.' This thickens the cervical mucus and makes it difficult for the sperm to reach the egg and thinning the lining of the womb to help prevent a fertilised egg from settling (implanting) in the womb

How do i get this?

- The Coil can only be inserted and removed by a specially trained doctor.
- Before insertion, the doctor may give you medication known as 'cytotec' if you fit the requirements, this will help to soften the cervix. You may also be given pain relief before insertion.
- The coil is inserted using a tube or inserter. The arms of the coil are folded back in this tube and inserted directly into the uterus. Once inside, the arms open and the coil is secured in place.
- After insertion, many people experience cramping and bleeding. This should subside in a few days, and over the counter pain relief should be used to manage this.



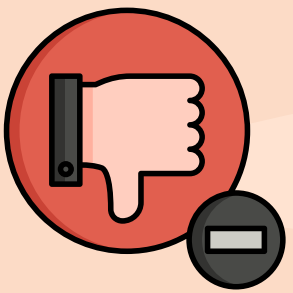
IUD

Advantages

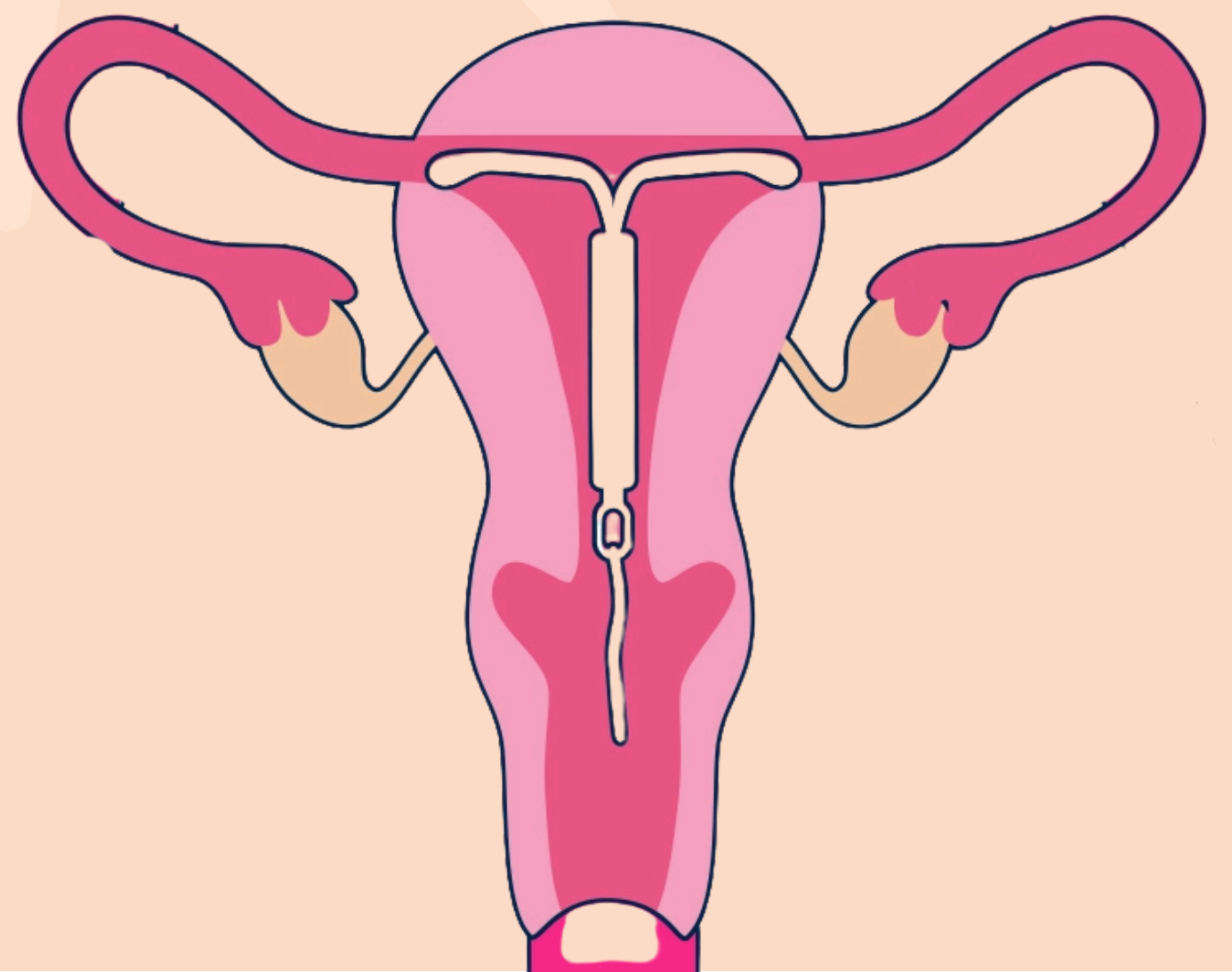


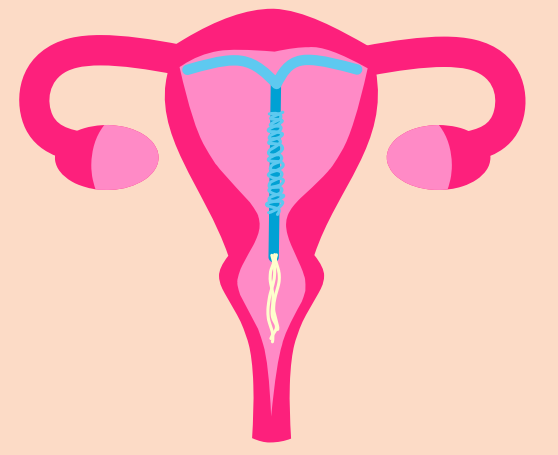
- Highly effective - pregnancy rate of less than 1%
- Long-lasting , only need to be replaced every 5-10 years depending on the brand
- Safe for breastfeeding
- May help with heavy periods

Disadvantages



- Many women report that insertion and removal can be painful
- Potential for side effects such as cramping, bleeding and infection
- Small risk of perforation during insertion
- Small risk of expulsion or movement





What can prevent my IUD working?

- Expulsion: If the IUD moves from its original position this can cause it to become ineffective.
- There is a small risk the IUD can become broken or damaged during insertion.
- There are small risks that the IUD can be fitted incorrectly due to incorrect measurement of uterus or uterine shape abnormalities.
- If your IUD expires it will lose its effectiveness.



Myths

“You can only get an iud if you’ve had children.”

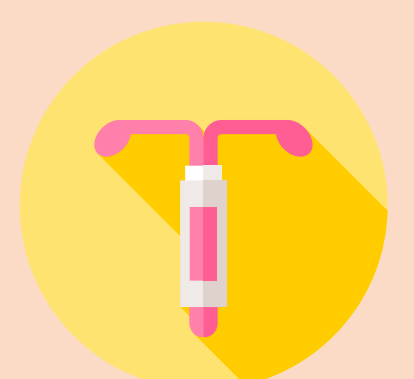
IUD’s are a safe, long-lasting and reliable option for all, including those who have never had children, and there is no evidence that it impacts fertility.

“My doctor said iud insertions don’t hurt and i don’t need pain relief”

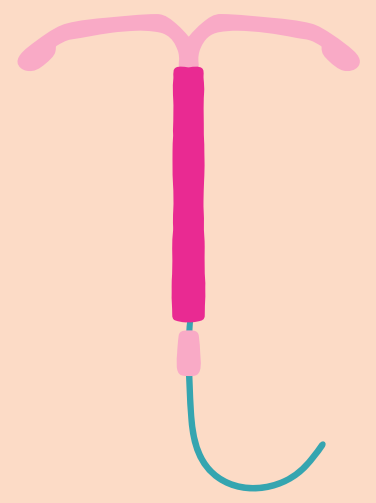
The procedure varies for everybody, however many women report heavy cramping and pain with insertion. You should speak to your doctor about pain relief and take medication approx 1 hour before the procedure. Hot water bottles and OTC medications can help in recovery.

“It protects against STI’s”

The IUD will not protect against STI’s and a condom should still be used to prevent transmission.



Copper Coil



Some Brand names:

- TT380 Slimline, Copper T380, Mini T380

How effective is it?

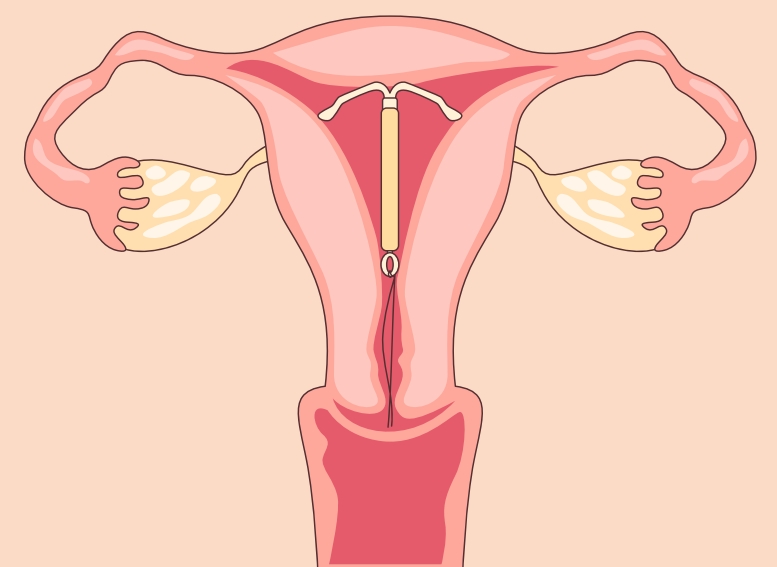
- Copper coils are a non-hormonal contraceptive and are over 99% effective

How it works:

- A Copper Coil, also known as Copper IUD prevent pregnancy by releasing copper which is toxic to sperm and interferes with fertilisation and implantation.

How do i get this?

- The Coil can only be inserted and removed by a specially trained doctor.
- Before insertion, the doctor may give you medication known as 'cytotec' if you fit the requirements, this will help to soften the cervix. You may also be given pain relief before insertion.
- The coil is inserted using a tube or inserter. The arms of the coil are folded back in this tube and inserted directly into the uterus. Once inside, the arms open and the coil is secured in place.
- After insertion, many people experience cramping and bleeding. This should subside in a few days, and over the counter pain relief should be used to manage this.



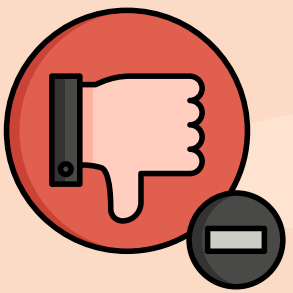
Copper Coil

Advantages

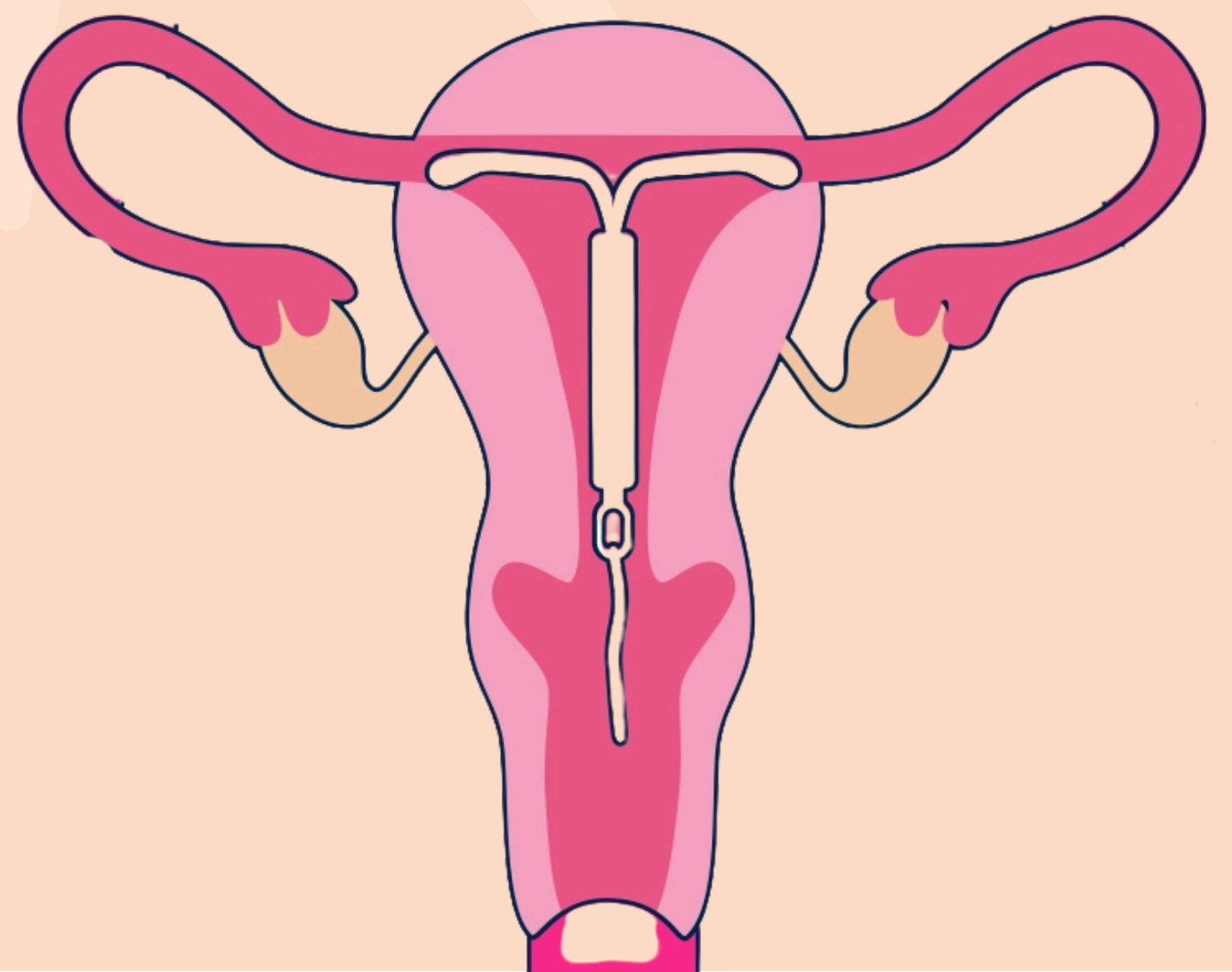


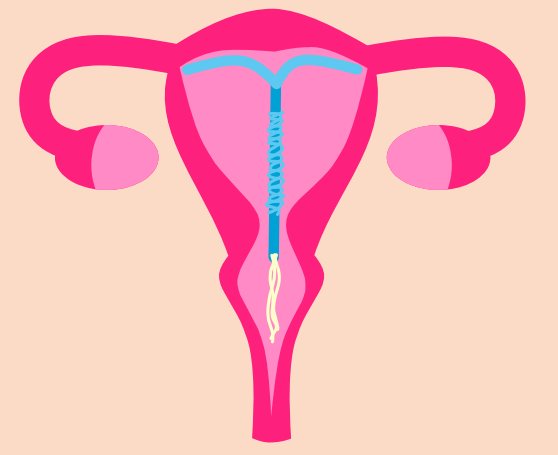
- Highly effective - pregnancy rate of less than 1%
- Long-lasting , only need to be replaced every 5-10 years depending on the brand
- Safe for breastfeeding
- Non-hormonal contraceptive

Disadvantages



- Many women report that insertion and removal can be painful
- Potential for side effects such as cramping, bleeding and infection
- Small risk of perforation during insertion
- Small risk of expulsion or movement
- Some women report heavier or more painful periods
- If pregnancy occurs, there is a risk of ectopic pregnancy





What can prevent my IUD working?

- Expulsion: If the IUD moves from its original position this can cause it to become ineffective.
- There is a small risk the IUD can become broken or damaged during insertion.
- There are small risks that the IUD can be fitted incorrectly due to incorrect measurement of uterus or uterine shape abnormalities.
- If your IUD expires it will lose its effectiveness.



Myths

“The copper coil releases toxic metals.”

The Copper Coil is perfectly safe and only releases trace amounts of copper, which can be safely processed by our body. This is only toxic to the sperm and makes fertilisation almost impossible.

“My doctor said iud insertions don't hurt and i don't need pain relief”

The procedure varies for everybody, however many women report heavy cramping and pain with insertion. You should speak to your doctor about pain relief and take medication approx 1 hour before the procedure. Hot water bottles and OTC medications can help in recovery.

“it can't be used as an emergency contraceptive”

The Copper Coil is actually the most effective form of emergency contraceptive if inserted within 5 days of unprotected sex.

Implant



Some Brand names:

- Implanon, Nexplanon, Jadelle

How effective is it?

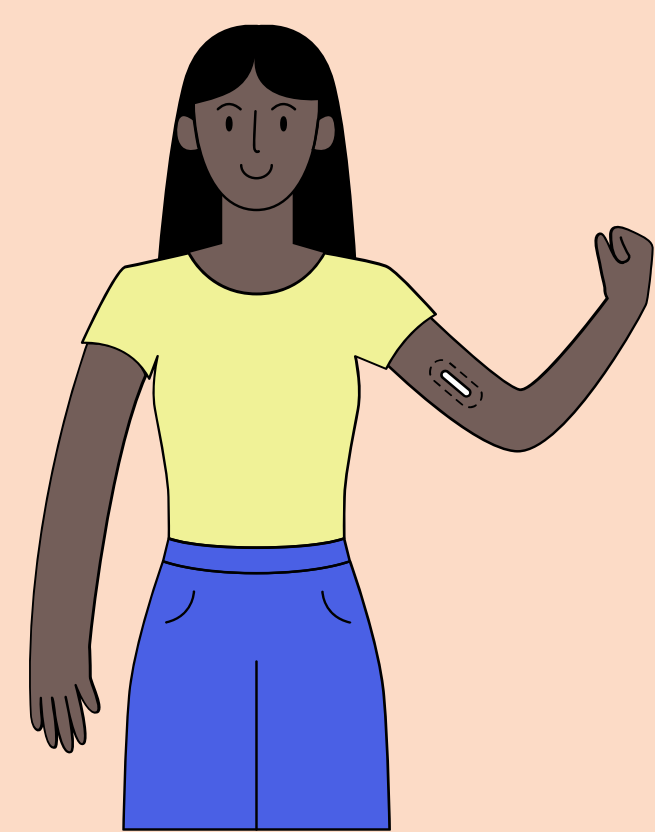
- The implant is a small bar inserted in the skin of the arm and is over 99% effective.

How it works:

- The implant is a small bar inserted in the arm which releases small amount of progesterone daily. This works to prevent pregnancy by thickening cervical mucus, halting ovulation, and thinning uterine lining.

How do i get this?

- The implant has to be inserted and removed by a specially trained doctor, many GP's can do this.
- Local anaesthetic will be applied to the area, ensuring it is numb and painless.
- A special device is used to make a small incision in your inner upper arm and insert the implant under the skin.
- The area will be covered with a bandage for a couple of days to keep it clean and dry.
- You will be able to feel the implant in your arm when feeling it afterwards. This is normal.



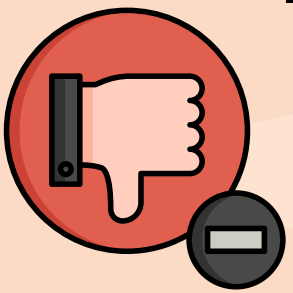
Implant

Advantages

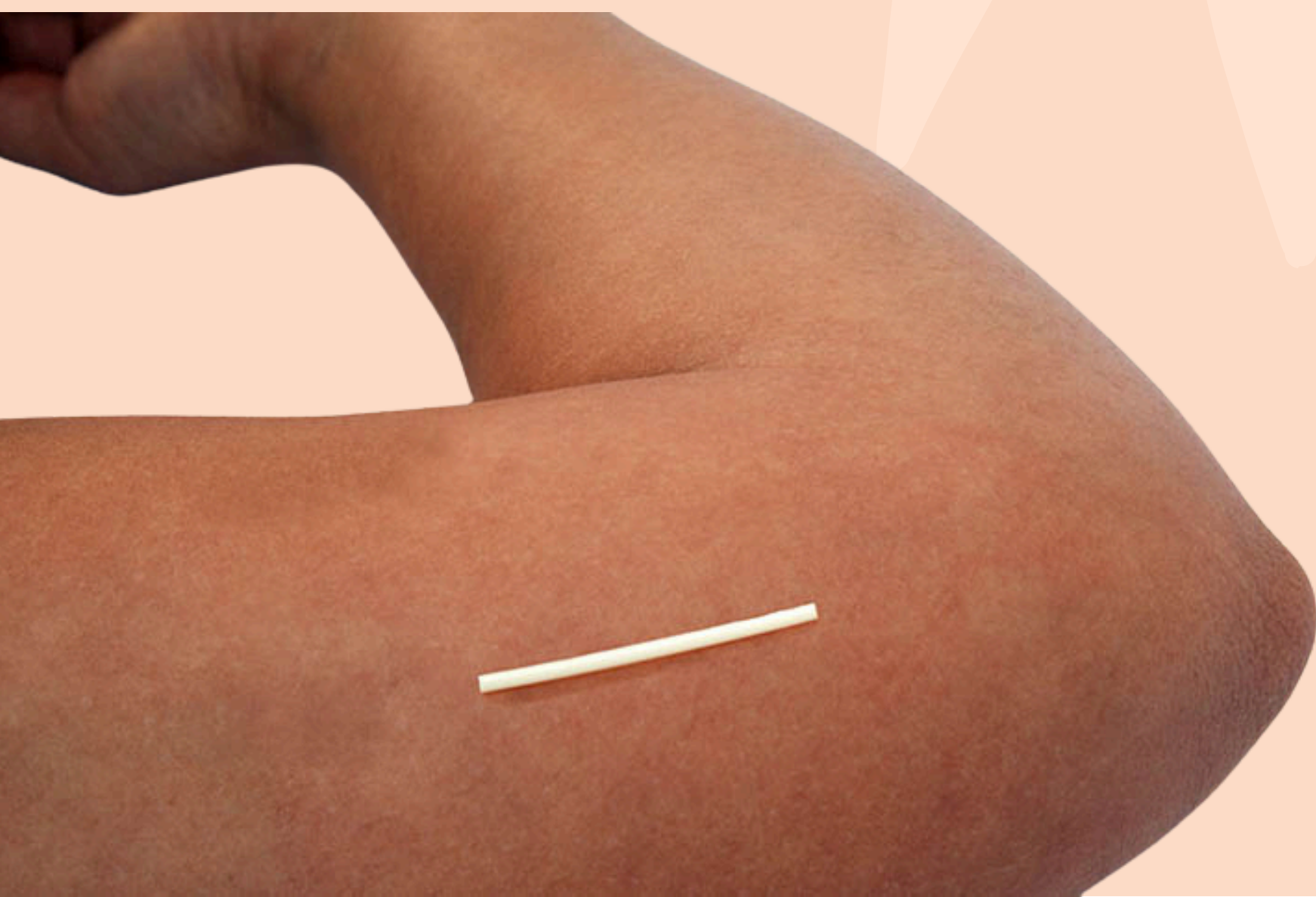


- The procedure is quick and painless due to the anaesthetic
- Provides 3-5 years of protection against pregnancy
- Suitable for people who cannot use Estrogen contraceptives.
- Safe for breastfeeding
-

Disadvantages



- Many women report changes in periods; either no periods, irregular bleeding, or changes in period patterns.
- May cause weight gain
- Doesn't protect against STI's
- In rare cases the implant can move from the site of insertion





What can prevent my implant working?

- Antibiotic rifampin (used for TB)
- Some anti-seizure meds (like carbamazepine, phenytoin)
- HIV meds
- St. John's Wort (a herbal antidepressant)
- Allowing your implant to expire



Myths

“Removal is painful and a long process”

Removal is quick and relatively painless due to the use of local anaesthetic.

“it causes mood swings and depression”

Any hormonal contraceptive can cause mood changes, however this does not happen to everyone. If mood changes do occur, the implant can be removed at any time.

“It protects against STI's”

The implant will not protect against STI's.

“It stops your periods”

Period changes are normal, however not everyone's periods will stop. Some people experience more consistent and irregular bleeding. This should always be discussed with your doctor.



Some Brand names:

- Evra

How effective is it?

- The contraceptive patch is over 99% effective with perfect and consistent use.

How it works:

- The contraceptive patch is a thin beige plaster like patch and can be applied to any area except your breasts. works by releasing hormones Estrogen and Progesterone through the skin and into the bloodstream. It works to prevent pregnancy by thickening cervical mucus, thinning the uterine lining and stopping ovulation.

How do i use it?

- If you start the patch between day 1 and day 5 of your period, you will be protected against pregnancy immediately.
- If you start the patch after day 5 of your period, condoms should be used for 7 days.
- The patch should be placed on a clean, dry, and hairless area of skin.
- You can place the patch on any part of your body except your breasts. It is best practice to avoid places that sweat and can encourage your patch to come off such as underarms and groin.
- Your patch should be changed every 7 days, with a 4 day break after every 3rd patch.
- This break is not mandatory and can be skipped.



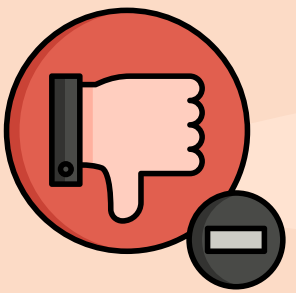
Patch

Advantages



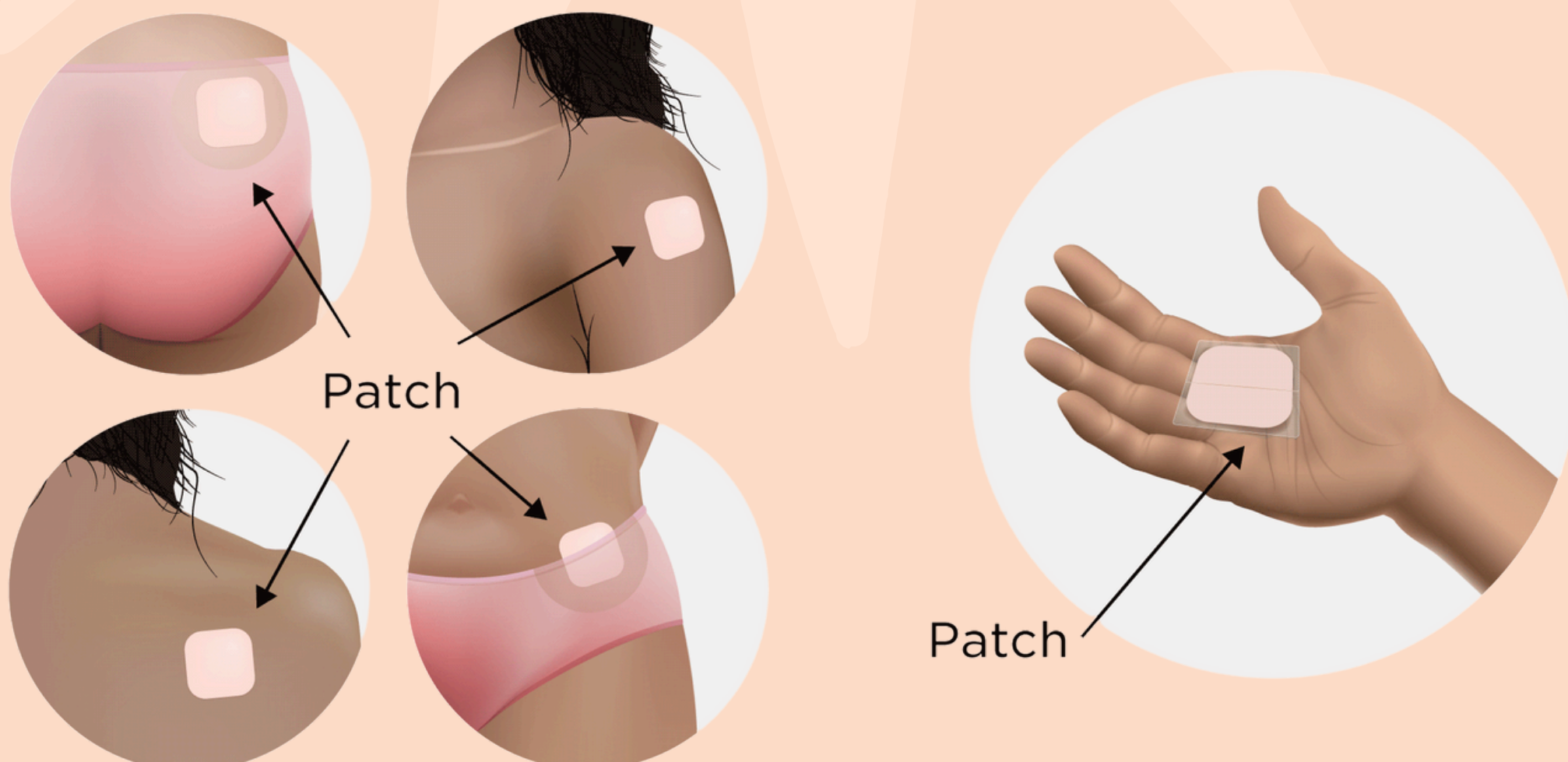
- Easy to use
- Doesn't interrupt sexual activity
- Easier to remember than taking a pill every day

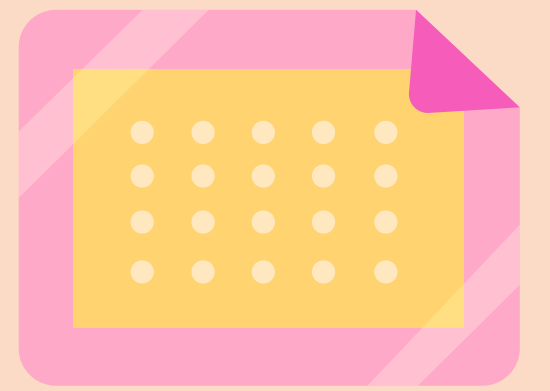
Disadvantages



- Effectiveness can be reduced by certain medications
- Not advised for smokers or those over 35
- Not suitable for those over 90kg
- May not be suitable for breastfeeding

Birth Control Patch





What can prevent my patch working?

- Leaving the patch on for too long
- Taking too long a break
- Smoking
- Being over 35
- Being over 90kg
- Antibiotic rifampin (used for TB)
- Some anti-seizure meds (like carbamazepine, phenytoin)
- HIV meds
- St. John's Wort (a herbal antidepressant)



Myths

“Patch protects against sti’s”

The Patch unfortunately does not protect against STI's. You need a condom for this.

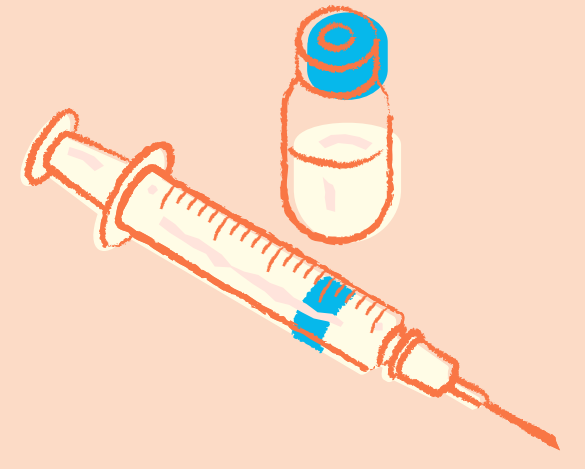
“The patch causes irregular bleeding,…”

The Patch can cause spotting in some people when starting. This should resolve in the first couple of weeks. The Patch can cause Amenorrhea or lighter periods in some.

“The patch will come off in the shower”

The Patch is designed to stay in place and it is difficult for it to fall off. However, if it does fall off for more than 3 hours a backup method should be used.

Injection



Some Brand Names:

- Depo-Provera

How effective is it?

- The injection is over 99% effective at preventing pregnancy with perfect use.

How it works:

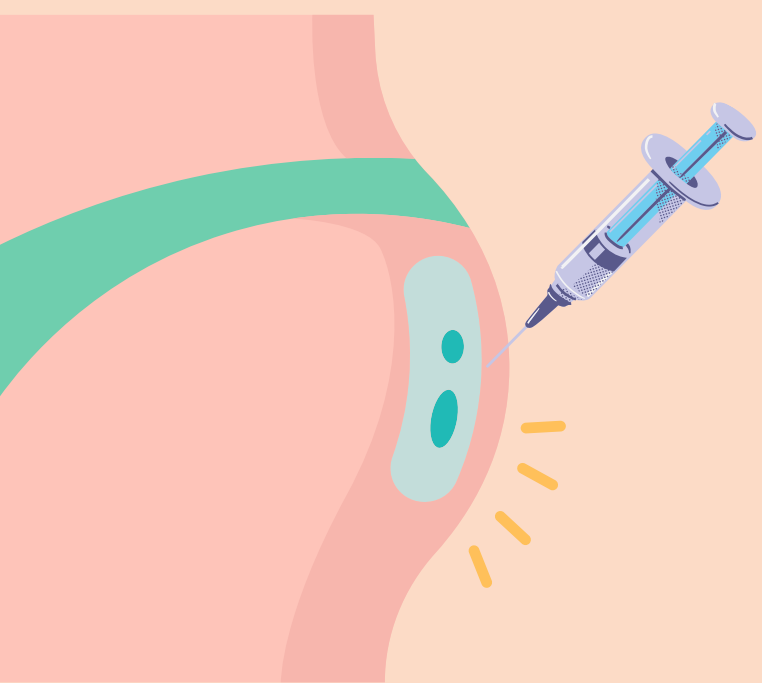
- The injection is given once every 12 weeks into the subcutaneous layer of the muscle in the buttocks. This works to prevent pregnancy by thickening cervical mucus, halting ovulation, and thinning uterine lining.

How do i get this?

- Your GP can provide you with the Depo-Provera injection once every 3 months. The injection is given into your buttocks or upper arms.

What can prevent my injection working?

- Late injection or missing a injection.
- Antibiotic rifampin (used for TB)
- Some anti-seizure meds (like carbamazepine, phenytoin)
- HIV meds
- St. John's Wort (a herbal antidepressant)



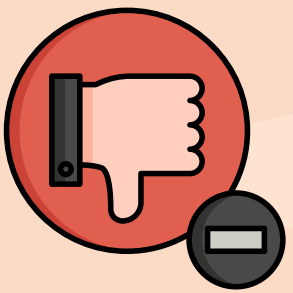
Injection

Advantages



- Highly effective
- Long lasting (every 12 weeks)
- Estrogen free- safe for breastfeeding
- May reduce or stop periods

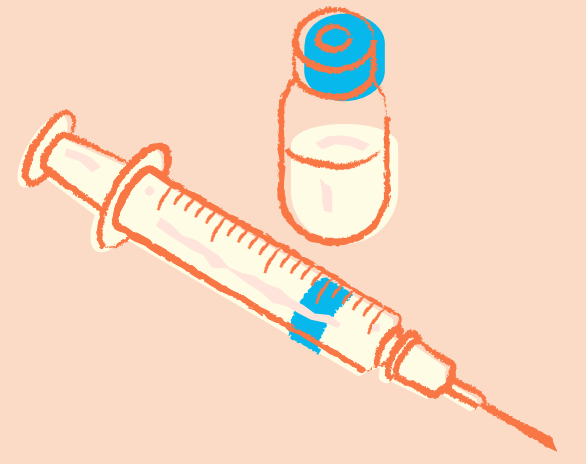
Disadvantages



- It can take 6-12 months for fertility to return
- Can reduce bone density
- Mood changes can occur
- Doesn't protect against STI's



injection



Myths

“The injection makes you infertile”

The injection may cause a slight delay in fertility with most reporting it returning within 6 months of stopping contraceptive.

“i’ll gain lots of weight”

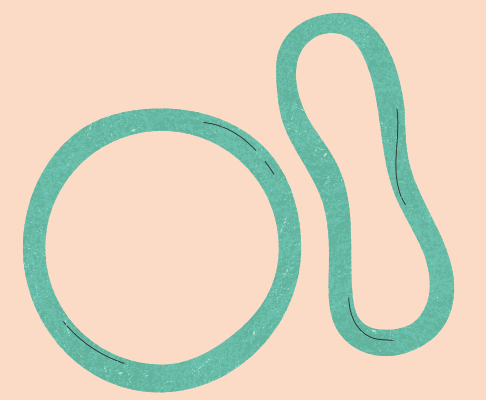
Not everyone gains weight while using the injection. Those that do report minimal weight fluctuation.

“It protects against STI’s”

THE INJECTION WILL NOT PREVENT YOU CONTRACTING ANY STI’S. ONLY A CONDOM OR GLYDE DAM WILL DO THAT.



Vaginal Ring



Some Brand Names:

- Nuvaring (most common in Ireland, Elu Ryng, Annovera)

How effective is it?

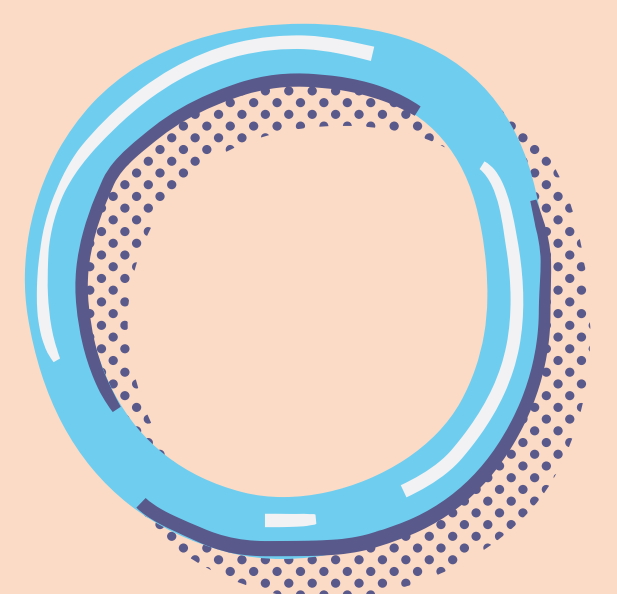
- 99% effective with perfect use, 91% effective with typical use

How it works:

A vaginal ring is flexible ring that you put into your vagina for up to 21 days without taking it out. It releases artificial hormones (oestrogen and progesterone) which is absorbed into your bloodstream. It works by preventing ovulation, thicken the cervical mucus, and thin the uterine lining. This the makes it difficult for sperm to reach the egg and or for a fertilized egg to implant in the uterus.

How do i get this?

You would need to get a prescription from your GP or a family planning centre. It is available on the GMS and can be bought at pharmacies.



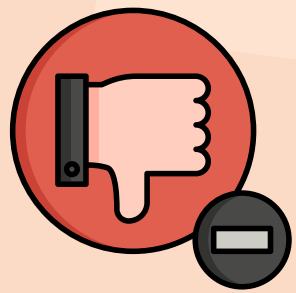
Vaginal Ring

Advantages



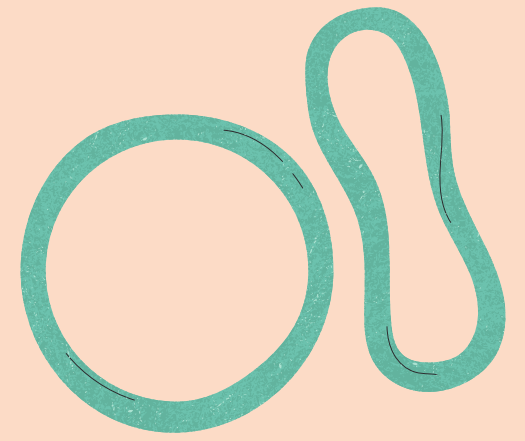
- Easy to use.
- Doesn't interrupt sexual activity.
- It is low dose hormonal contraceptive.
- You do not have to remember to take daily pills.
- Return to natural cycle is quick when you stop using vaginal ring.
- You insert the vaginal ring yourself

Disadvantages



- Effectiveness can be reduced by certain medications
- Not advised for smokers or those over 35
- Not suitable for those who are overweight
- May not be suitable for breastfeeding
- It does not protect against STI
- Side effects such as reduce sex drive, Acne, spotting, weight gain and headache





What can prevent my VAGINAL RING working?

- Improper use (not inserting it at the right time or taking it out too soon)
- Some antibiotic can affect the hormones in the ring.
- Some anti-seizure meds (like carbamazepine, phenytoin)
- St. John's Wort (a herbal antidepressant).
- Medical condition Such as migraines specially those with aura, being overweight and certain heart, liver or gall bladder condition.



Myths

"It is not as effective as other contraceptive."

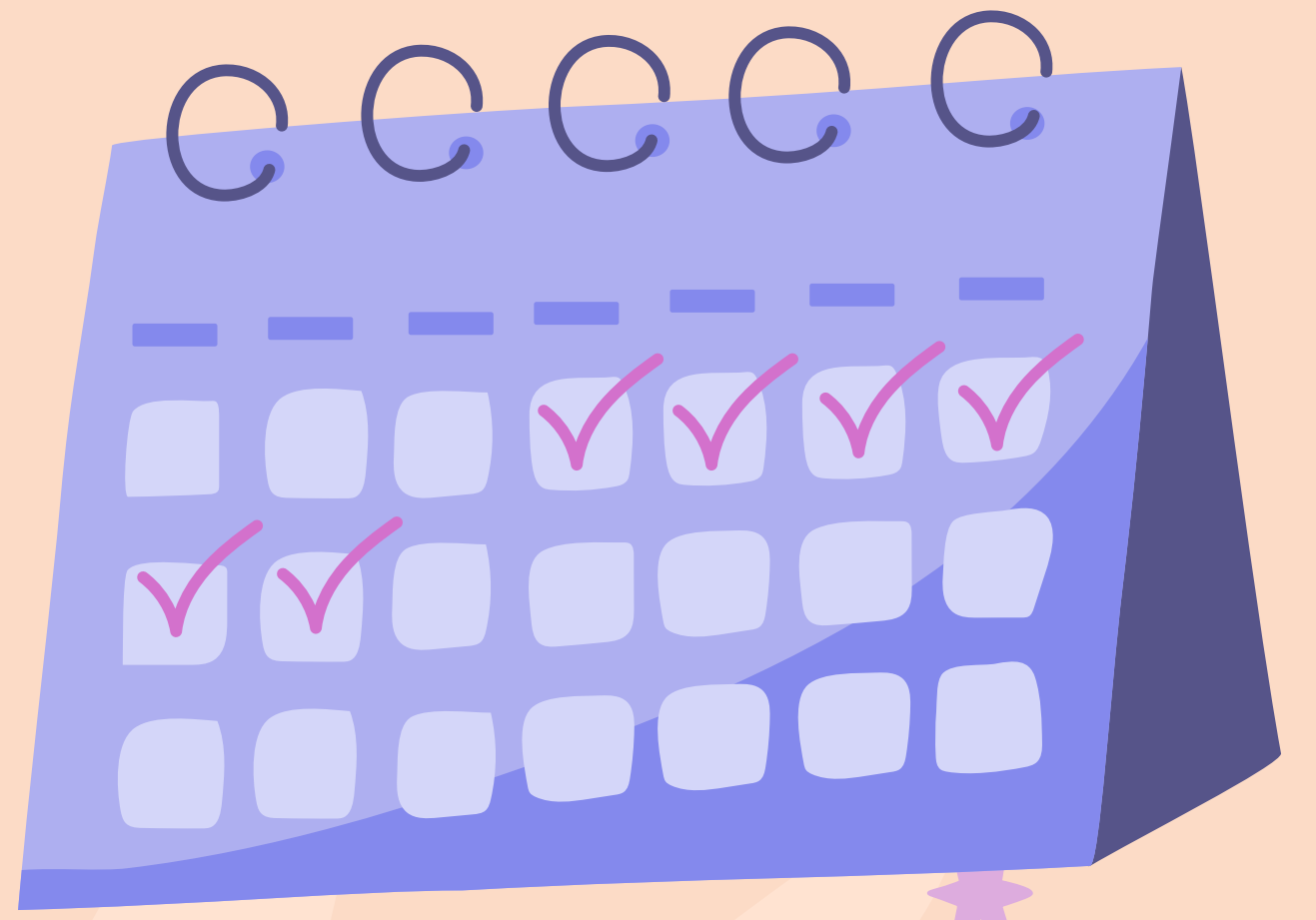
When the vaginal ring is used properly it is highly effective. it is 98-99% effect in preventing pregnancy.

"You can feel it during sex."

Some people believe you can feel the ring during inter course which is false. Individuals using it reported not feeling it during intercourse.

"It protects against STI's"

The vaginal ring will not prevent you contracting any STI's only a condom or glyde dam can protect you from an STI.



OTHER CONTRACEPTIVES



Spermicide



Some Brand Names:

Trojan, Caya, Contragel, Gygel

How effective is it?

Spermicide is 72% effective. It becomes more effective when used with other contraceptives such as condom and diaphragm.

How it works:

Spermicides contain a chemical that damages sperm membrane. Most spermicides contain the chemical nonoxynol-9 (N-9). While it doesn't actually kill the sperm, it does stop it from reaching an egg. While some spermicides work by blocking the entrance to your cervix (the lowest part of your uterus) and by stopping sperm from swimming up to an egg.

How do i get this?

You can get spermicide at the pharmacy without a prescription. or at some super market.



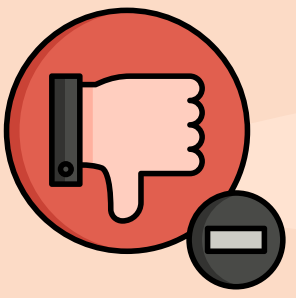
Spermicide

Advantages

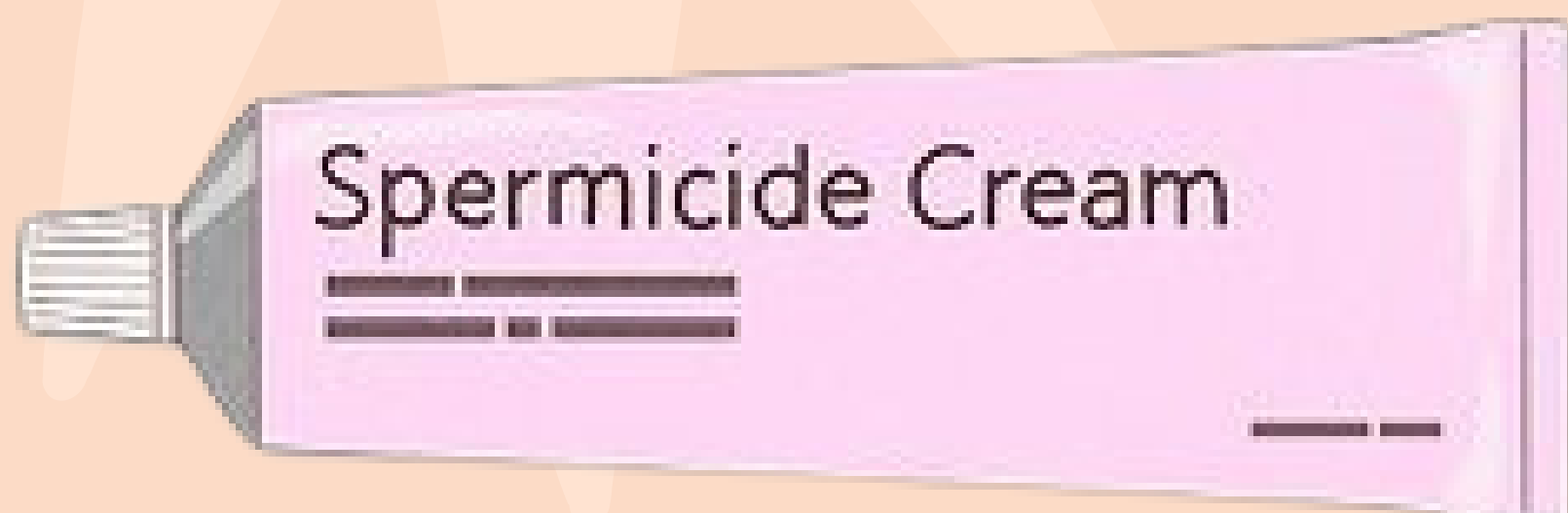


- Easy to use
- It is cost effective and accessible
- Doesn't interrupt sexual activity
- It doubles as a lubricant
- It does not contain hormones

Disadvantages



- It has to be reapplied each time you have sex
- It does not protect against STI
- It can cause irritation and pain
- It has been linked to UTI's (Urinary Tract Infection)



Spermicide



What can prevent SPERMICIDE working?

- Using it incorrectly (Not waiting the recommended time before intercourse after application)
- Forgetting to use it each time before intercourse
- Using it alone, spermicide is recommended to be used with other contraceptive.



Myths

"Spermicide can be used alone"

Spermicide resulted in pregnancy in 28 couples out of 1000 when used alone. The effectiveness increases when used with other contraceptives.

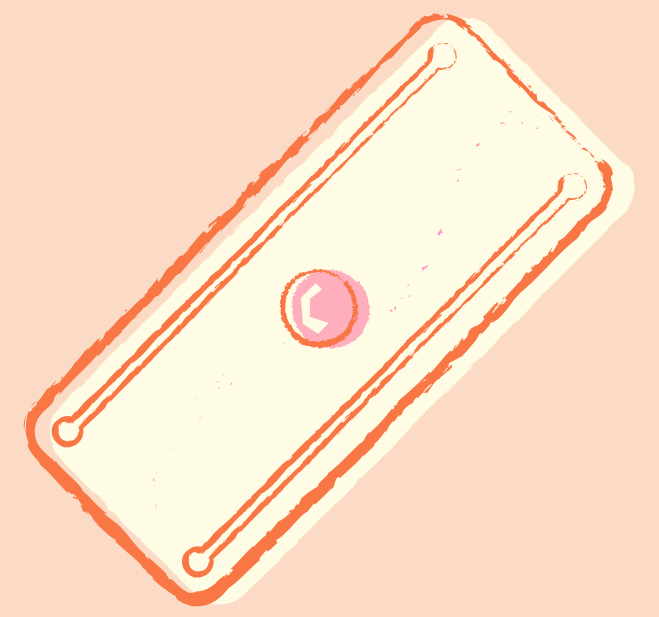
"Put in as much spermicide as you can."

Using more than the recommended amount does not increase effectiveness. Instead it increases chances of irritation and infection.

"It protects against STI's"

Spermicide does not protect you against STI's.

Emergency Contraception



Some Brand Names:

Ellaone, Norlevo, Prevenelle, Plan B

how effective is it?

Emergency contraception also known as the morning after pill is about 95% effective if taken within 24 hours after having intercourse, with effectiveness decreasing to 58% within 72 hours.

How it works:

Emergency contraception contains either Levonorgestrel or Ulipristal acetate which works by delaying or preventing ovulation. without ovulation, the egg is not released from the ovary and fertilisation can not occur. It can also make it harder for a fertilised egg to implant in the uterus.

Types of emergency contraception

	ellaOne	Levonelle	Levonorgestrel	IUD
How effective is it?	98-99%	97-99%	97-99%	More than 99%
When to take it?	should be taken before 120 hours after unprotected sex	should be taken before 72 hours after unprotected sex	should be taken before 72 hours after unprotected sex	should be inserted before 120 hours after unprotected sex

How do i get this?

- Emergency contraceptives can be purchased at the pharmacy
- At the GP and at the family planning clinic.
- Women between the age 17-35 can get the emergency contraceptive for free at participating pharmacies.
- Medical card holders can get free emergency contraceptive.

Emergency Contraceptive

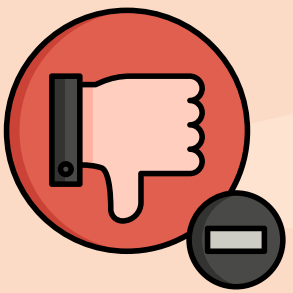


Advantages



- Easy to use
- Doesn't interrupt sexual activity
- Does not affect long term fertility
- Readily available
- Very effective if taken correctly

Disadvantages

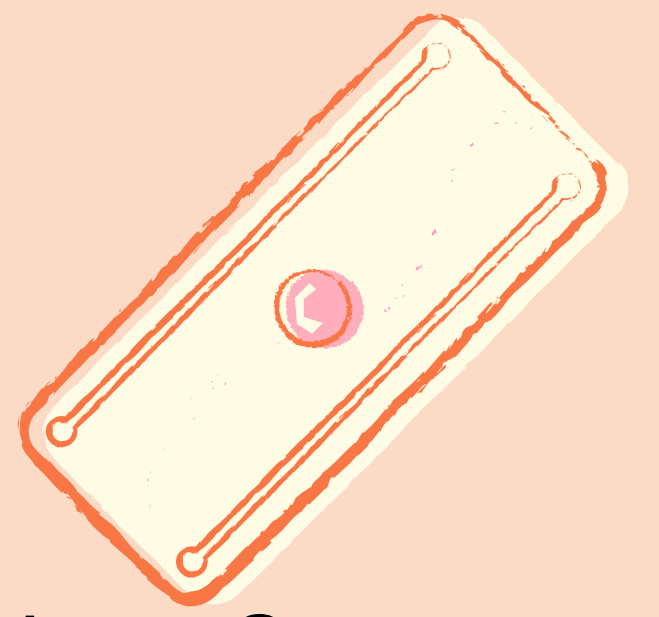


- can change menstrual cycle
- Pain or cramping to your abdomen
- Breast tenderness
- Can cause spotting (Light vaginal bleeding)

IF YOU EXPERIENCE CONCERNING SIDE EFFECTS AFTER TAKING EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVE, REACH OUT TO YOUR GP



Emergency Contraception



What can prevent my contraceptive working?

- Missing a pill - use condoms for the rest of the pack if you have missed a pill. Continue taking your pill as normal.
- Vomiting within 2-3 hours of after your pill.
- If you weight more than
- St. John's Wort (a herbal antidepressant) or Barbiturates (sedative)
- Taking it more than 72 hours late or 105 hours late depending on the pill



Myths

"Repeated use of emergency contraceptive makes you infertile."

Emergency contraceptive has a temporary effect on the ability to conceive. There is no scientific evidence that suggest repeated use causes infertility.

"You can only take the pill 24 hours after unprotected sex."

Emergency contraceptive is effective for up to 5 days after having unprotected sex depending the type used. Although it is important to note the sooner it is used after intercourse the more effective it is.

"Using emergency contraception is abortion."

The pill does not terminate a pregnancy. it prevents an egg from being fertilised or prevents a fertilised egg from implanting in the uterus.

Pull Out Method



How effective is it?

Typically the pull out method is only 78% effective as a contraceptive methods. If done perfectly it then rises to 96% in effectiveness.

How it works:

The pull out method works by attempting to remove the penis from the vagina before ejaculation. This carries a high risk as there is a large margin for error.

Risks of this method

It is estimated that 1 in 5 who use the withdrawal method will fall pregnant each year.

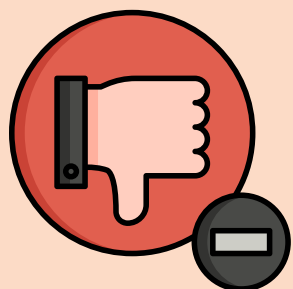
It is unreliable as pre-ejaculate can contain sperm which can lead to fertilisation.

Advantages



- Free
- No prescription required
- Doesn't interrupt sex

Disadvantages



- Unreliable due to human error and pre-ejaculate
- Does not protect against STI's





What can prevent pull out method working?

- Pre-ejaculate can contain sperm
- Withdrawal can be difficult to time correctly
- Semen or pre-cum being near or on Vulva.



Myths

"Pulling out is effective if the man can accurately predict when he would ejaculate."

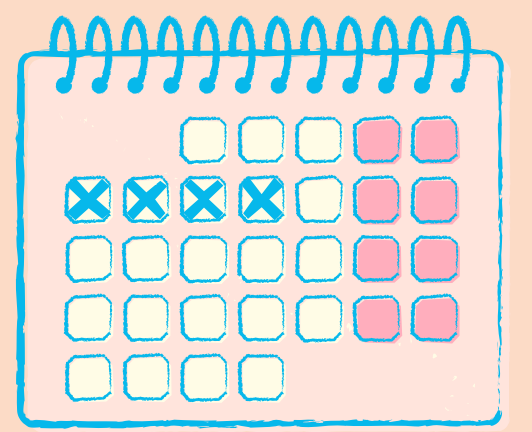
This is false as pre-ejaculate can contain sperm which could travel to an egg and could result in pregnancy. The risk of pre-ejaculate containing sperm is higher if there has been a recent ejaculation, this includes masturbation.

"Experienced men can pull out properly."

Any one can make a mistake while timing ejaculation during intercourse regardless of experience. Distraction, stress, and trying to delay orgasm can all lead to wrong timing.

"I can't get an STI if they don't ejaculate (cum) in me"

Pre-ejaculate can still transmit STI's. This method provides no protection from STI transmission.



Some Brand Names:

Flo, Clue, Glow, Natural cycles, MeetYou.

How effective is it?

Cycle tracking is effective 75% of the time. When used correctly it can be 91%-99% accurate. Is not recommended for individuals whose cycle is less than 26 or longer than 36 days.

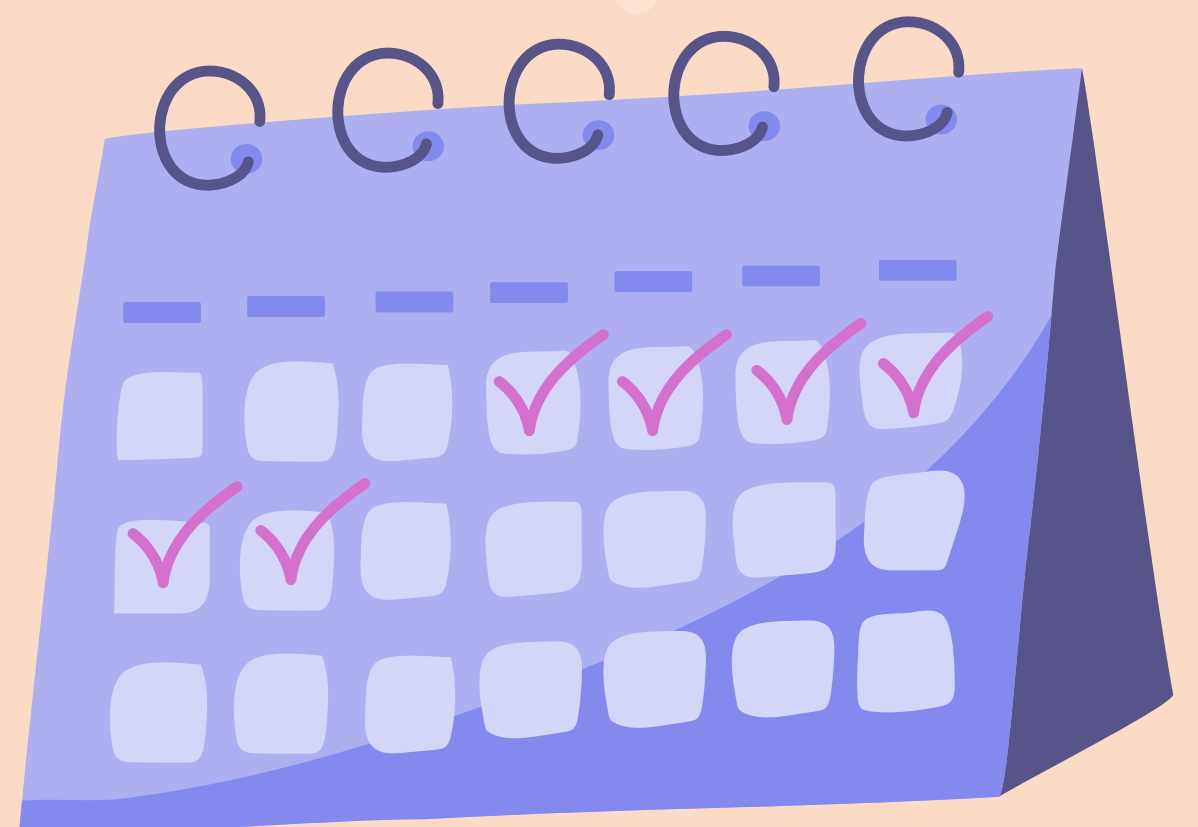
How it works:

Cycle Tracking, also known as Natural Family Planning or period tracking; works by using a 28 day cycle as reference, Ovulation typically starts 14 days after the first day of your period (first day of bleeding). Ovulation is the most fertile part of the cycle. Fertilization can only occur 24hrs after an egg is released from the ovaries and sperm can live for 5 days. It recommended for individuals using cycle tracking to avoid intercourse 5 days before and 3 days after ovulation.

How do i get this?

You can download these apps from the app store, some have subscription costs.

You can get ovulation testing kits at the pharmacy or super market.



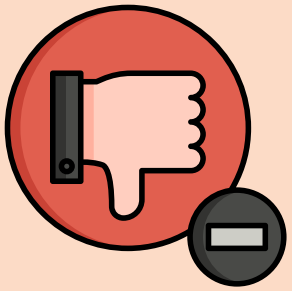
Cycle Tracking

Advantages



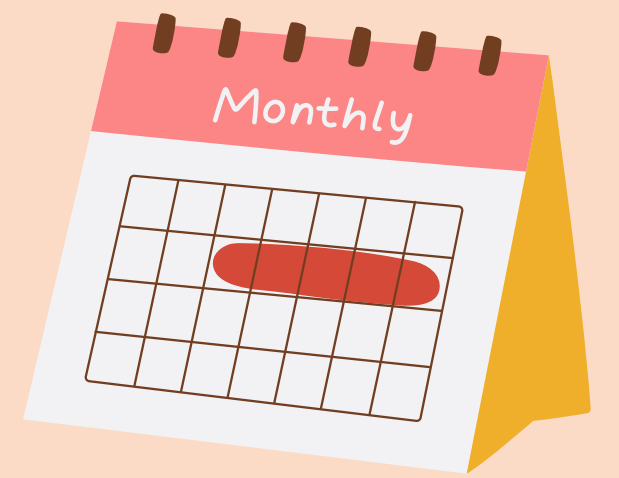
- Easy to use
- Doesn't interrupt sexual activity
- It is none hormonal
- It is cost effective
- Gives the option to stop birth control quickly.

Disadvantages



- There is no protection against STI's
- Not suitable for people with individual with irregular periods.
- Requires back up contraceptive for about 10days per period.
- It takes months to note a pattern of your cycle.
- Mistakes can easile be made while tracking menstrual cycle.





What can prevent cycle tracking from working?

- Some medical conditions such as PCOS (Polycystic Ovary Syndrome)
- Lifestyles factors such as alcohol consumption, stress, extreme diets can make it hard to cycle track.
- Irregular periods.
- Antibiotic or anti-inflammatory drugs can affect menstrual cycle.
- Incorrectly recording menstrual cycle or not understanding fertility sign.



Myths

"You can't get pregnant unless you're ovulating."

Although it is true that women have a fertile window during ovulation, sperm can survive in the body for several days. There is a chance of pregnancy if ovulation starts unexpectedly or sperm survives till ovulation.

"It is easy to track your fertile window."

It is very hard to track your menstrual cycle with apps alone as cycle can vary month to month. Also, various factors such as stress, weight can affect cycle duration and ovulation.

"It is as effective as modern contraceptives"

Cycle tracking is not as effective when compared to modern contraceptives. This means a higher percentage of people using cycle tracking experience unexpected pregnancies.



Free **CONTRACEPTIVES** *Scheme*



Free Scheme



Who can avail?

Free contraception is available to women, girls, trans and non-binary people ages 17- 35. You will need to provide your name, date of birth, address and pps number.

What's covered?

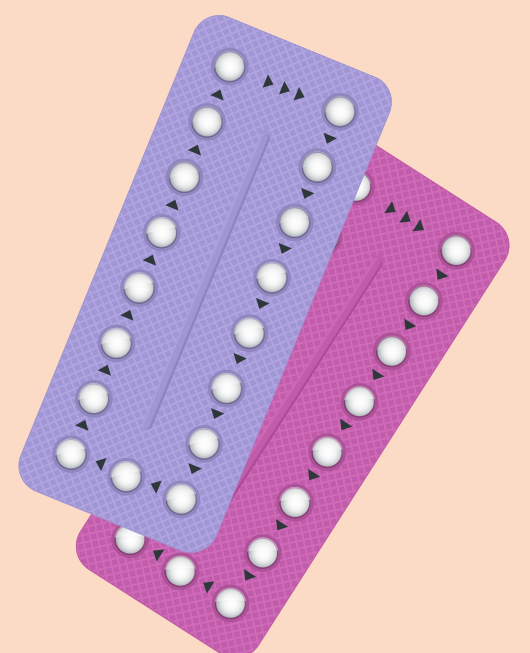
Appointments, prescriptions and emergency contraception (morning after pill).

Prescriptions include the combination and Mini pill, the contraceptive patch or ring, implant, injection, IUD or IUS, emergency contraception and HRT free of charge.

Gp appointments concerning your contraception options, repeat prescriptions and any check-ups or follow up are covered under this scheme. Your appointments for fittings and removals of long-acting reversible contraception (LARCs) are also included.

How it works:

When booking an appointment just make it known that you are booking as part of the free contraception scheme and that you are covered. You will need to give your PPS number, name, date of birth and address at your appointment and the pharmacy. This is to ensure that you are in the 17 to 35 age group covered by the free contraception service. Since June 1st 2025, prescriptions for HRT are included, however appointments are currently at the cost of the patient.



Free Scheme



Providers:

Around 95% of Gps are part of the free contraception service but just double check this when making your initial appointment.

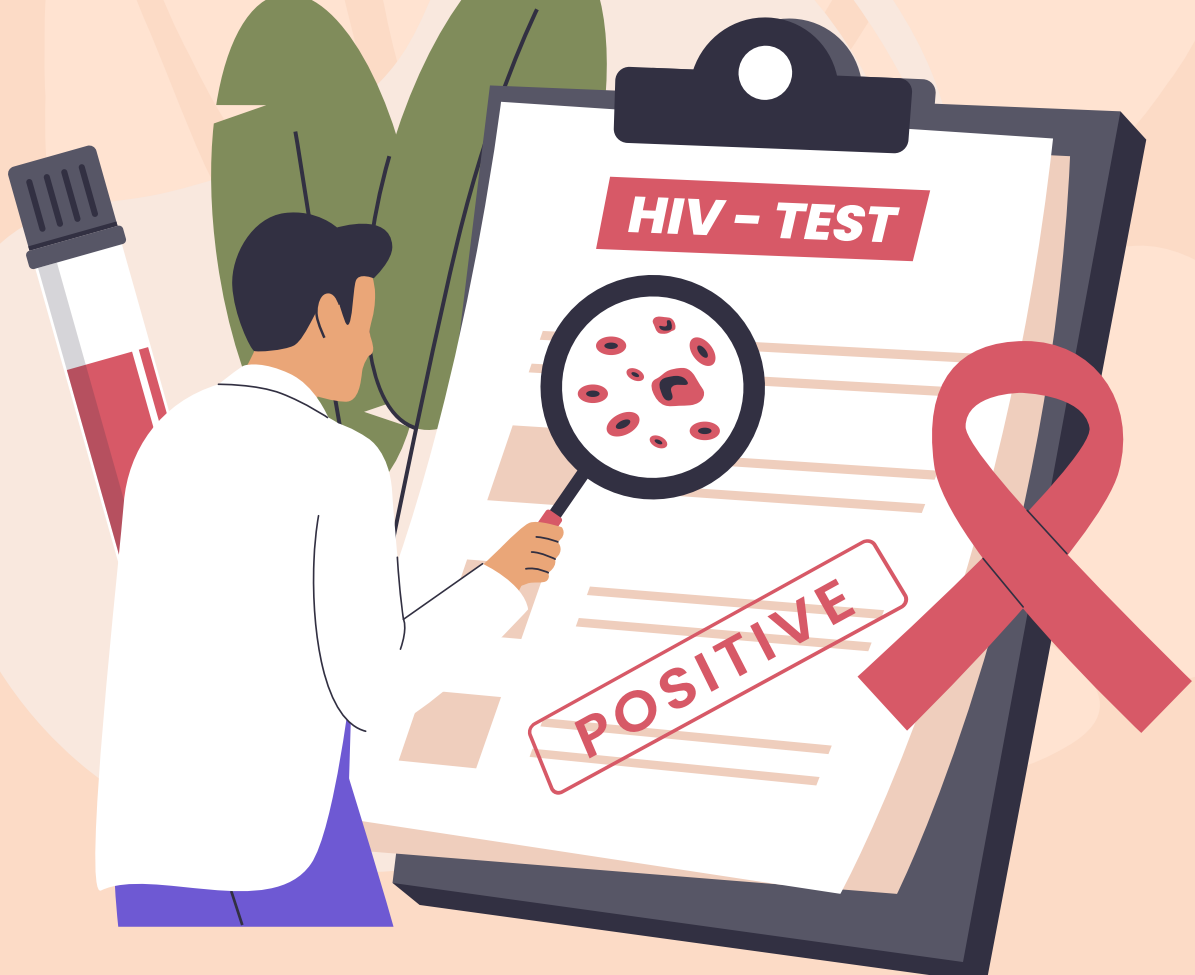
If you don't have a GP or would rather use another service then the free contraception scheme is also available at some family planning clinics, women's clinics or health centres.

A list of clinics offering free contraception is available at <https://sexualwellbeing.ie/sexual-health/contraception/free-contraception/free-contraception-providers.html>



So, Your
CONTRACEPTIVES
Fail...

STI TESTING



Where can i get tested?

You can get tested at GOSHH for HIV, HEP C, and SYphilis via rapid test and receive your results in just 15 minutes. You can also be tested at your local sti clinic, sexual health centres, certain gps and pharmacies. You can also do at-home testing kits, such as SH24.

How does it work?

Depending on what kind of sex you are having and with who, this determines the kinds of tests you will receive. Different types of tests administered can include blood samples, these are taken either by blood withdrawal or a finger prick, urine samples, or swab samples which can be carried out orally, anally, vaginally or of the penis or urethra.

Testing at GOSHH

Testing at GOSHH completely free. GOSHH provides three rapid tests via a finger prick blood sample - HIV, Syphilis and Hepatitis C. These tests take 10 minutes to carry out and develop and you will have the results before you leave.



Testing at goshh:

GOSHH also carries out some chlamydia and gonorrhoea testing via urine sample. Do not urinate for 2 hours before your sample is taken. You will provide your sample while at GOSHH. This sample will then be taken to a lab and tested. Your results will be communicated to you via text.

Our personal support team are there to chat to you about any concerns you may have. Any positive tests will then be referred to the local clinic for follow-on treatment and medication.

Where can I get more information?

More information regarding STIs and testing is available from www.sexualwellbeing.ie



What are these?

SH:24 is an at home STI'S testing kit. They work with the HSE to deliver home STI testing kit, diagnosis and remote specialist support across the Republic of Ireland. They are a non-profit organisation that priorities discreet, clinically safe and convenient experience for those who uses their services.

How does it work?

You can either complete an online assessment on their website sh24.ie where they will recommend a kit and post this out, or come into GOSHH where staff will help you find the right kit for you. The kits are discreet and a text is sent when it has been posted. You can find instructions both in the kit and on our SH24 resource on the GOSHH website!

How can i order these?

You can order these to your house on www.sh24.ie or come pick up a test any time at GOSHH!

What if i'm positive?

If your results are positive, you will receive a text message from SH:24. If you need further testing from a hospital or laboratory they will help you find a clinic close to you.

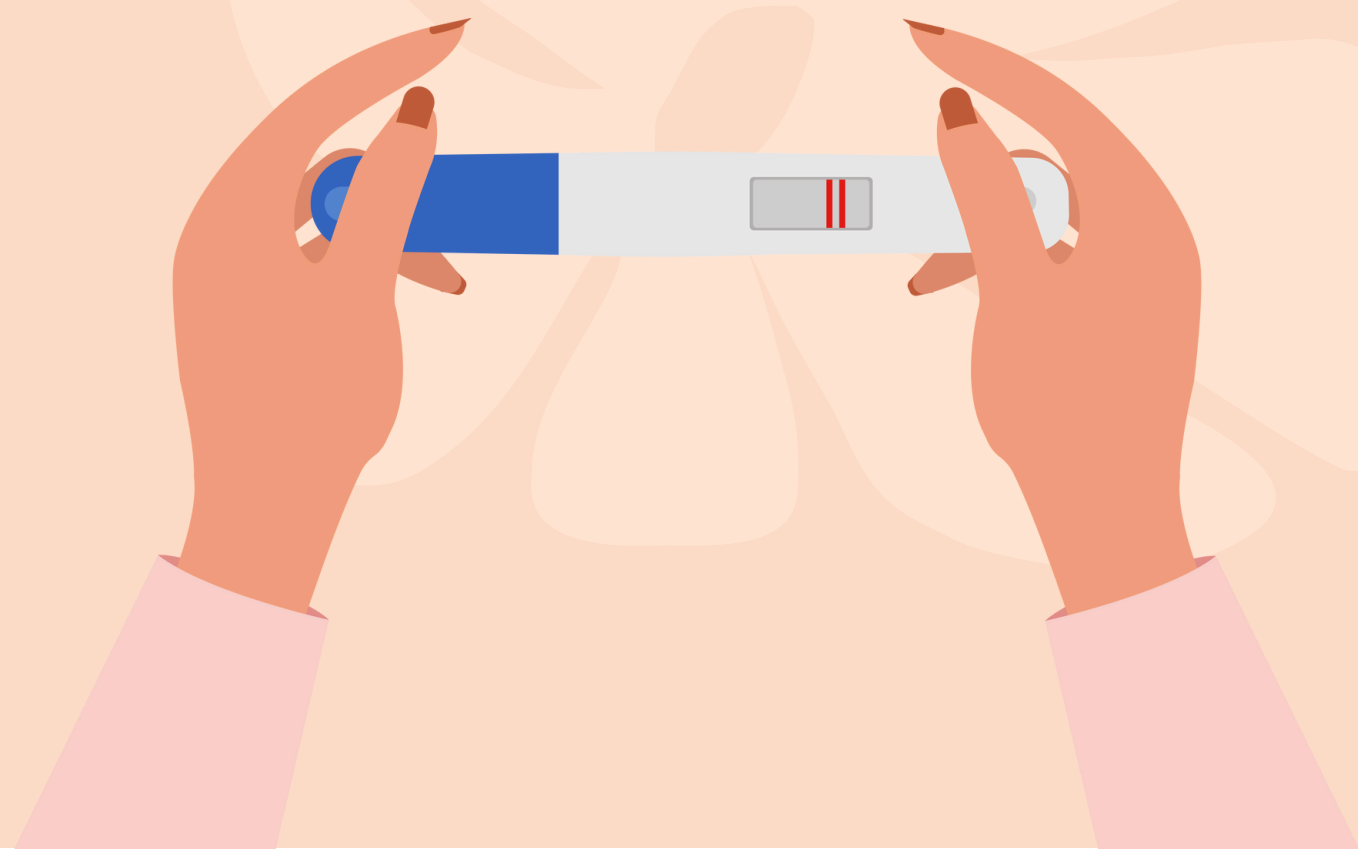
If you test positive for chlamydia or gonorrhoea, SH:24 may send treatment by post or help connect you with appropriate healthcare services and a prescription.

SH:24 also offers anonymous partner notification service.

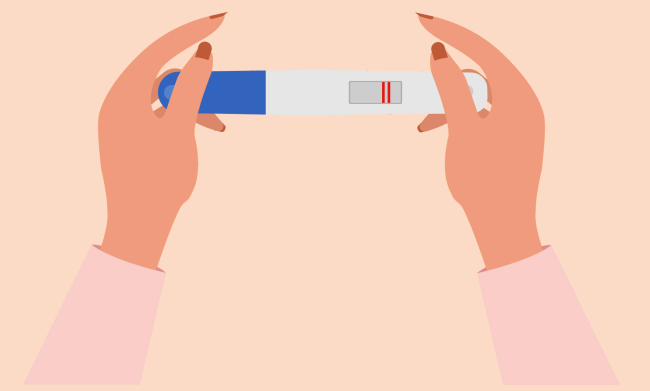


So, Your
CONTRACEPTIVES
Fail...

**Pregnancy
Tests**



Pregnancy Tests



How soon can i take one?

For the most accurate result you should wait until the first day of your missed period (the day you are due). Early detection tests state they can provide a result at just 10 days past ovulation (dpo). It is important to remember you can get a false negative at this time due to low hcg levels.

Can i get a pregnancy test from a doctor?

If you are uncertain about your test results, you can most certainly get a pregnancy test in your GP or Family planning centre. This is most likely completed by urine sample.

What if it's positive?

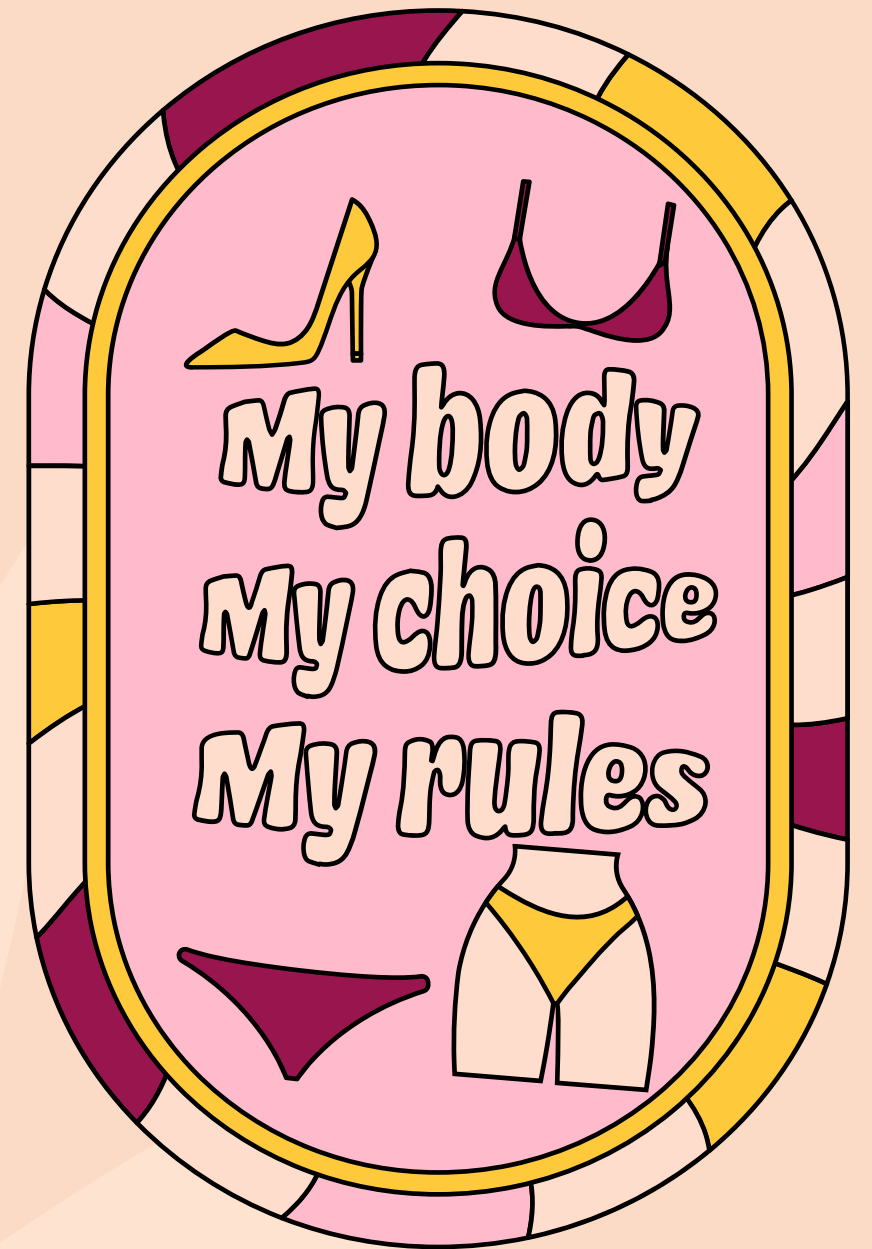
If you get a positive home pregnancy test it is recommended to see a doctor to confirm the result.

|

If you decide to maintain the pregnancy, your doctor will refer you to your local maternity unit.

If you are seeking abortion care you can contact my options on 1800 828 010 for information on local clinics. They can talk you through the process and offer support.





So, Your

CONTRACEPTIVES

Fail....

**Abortion
Care**



My pregnancy test is Positive & I want an abortion...

If you are under 12 weeks pregnant (84 days since last period), you can choose to have an abortion. The location of the procedure depends on how far along you are.

If you are under 9 weeks you can access a medical abortion in a GP's office or Family Planning Clinic.

If you are 9--12 weeks pregnant you will need to have an abortion in a maternity hospital. This could be done medicinally or surgically, and you will be guided by a consultant on this.

What do i do?

Myoptions will provide you with the details of local abortion care providers. You should call and make an appointment in order to confirm the pregnancy. You will have 2 appointments 3 days apart (see more on next page.)

Is it free?

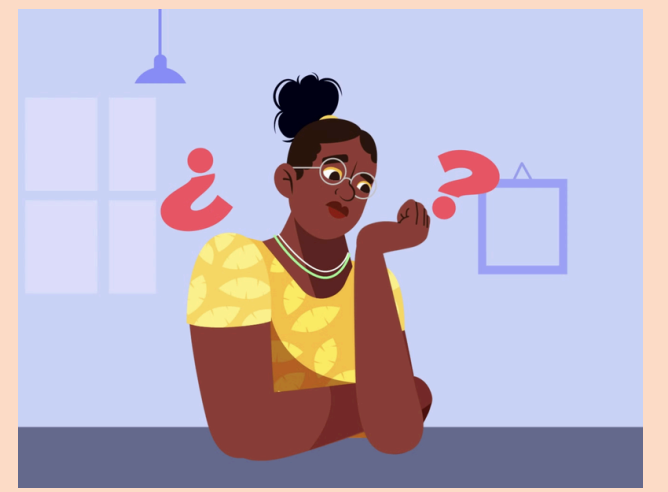
Yes it free if you live in Ireland and have a PPSN. If you live outside Ireland you can get an abortion here, but it does carry a cost.,

Where can i get one?

You can get an abortion at:

- a GP that provides abortion services
- women's health clinics
- family planning clinics





First appointment

The first appointment must be done in person to confirm the pregnancy. A pre-abortion consultation is done to allow the doctor to confirm the pregnancy is under 12 weeks (84 days since last period). Here, the procedure will be clearly explained to you.

Three day wait

The 3 day wait before an abortion is mandatory. It is to allow for reflection after the initial consultation. It also ensures that the individual has time to consider their decision and access support if needed.

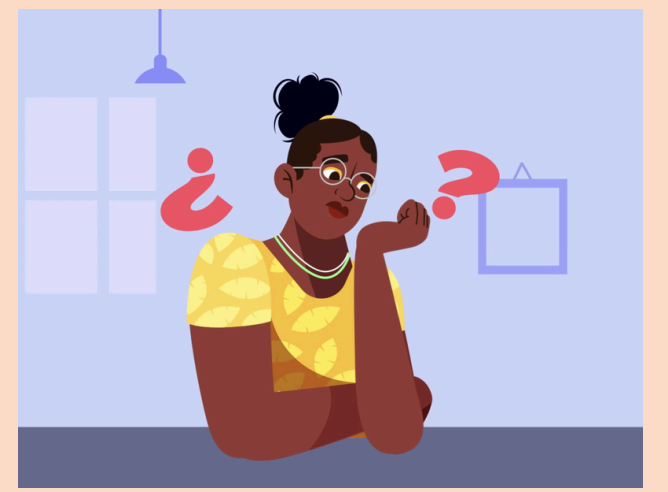
Second appointment and procedure

During this appointment you will be asked to sign a medical consent form, this says you agree to the procedure and understand any risks associated. It also signifies that you are consenting to the procedure of your own free will. (Please note risks are minimal, but are present as with any medical procedure)

Medical abortion: This is where your pregnancy is ended by taking medication. If you are under 9 weeks, this can be done in a GP. If you are between 9-12 weeks, you will have to take this in a hospital. Please see next page for more.

Surgical abortion: This procedure is always completed in a hospital. You will be sedated or placed under anesthesia. Please see next page for more.





Medical Abortion- What to expect

You will take the first medication (mifepristone) at the clinic in the presence of the doctor. This medication stops the hormone that allows the pregnancy to continue. The lining of the uterus breaks down and the pregnancy cannot continue. You will not have any cramping at this stage and can continue normal activities. Once you take mifepristone, the abortion will begin. It is irreversible. If you decide not to take the second tablet, there is a risk of harm to the fetus if you continue with the pregnancy. Your doctor will then give you 2 more tablets to take at home 24- 48 hours later, as well as a special pregnancy test to take 14 days later to ensure you are no longer pregnant.

24-48 later, you will be expected to take a second medication, (misoprostol). You take these by putting them in between your gum and cheek on either side of your mouth and letting them dissolve for 30 minutes.

This works by making your womb contract, causing cramping and bleeding to expel the pregnancy.

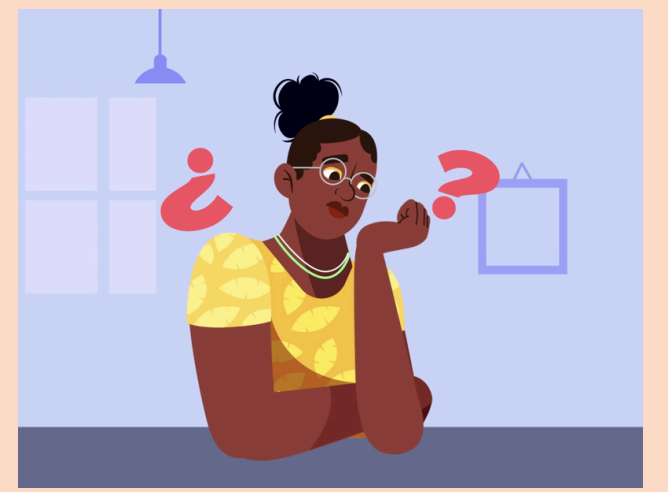
Bleeding usually starts 2 hours after taking this, but it is normal for bleeding to start later or earlier than that.

Side effects can include:

- Dizziness
- Nausea
- Headaches
- Diarrhea
- Flushes

Pain and cramping are normal with an abortion. The pain level depends on the person. Ensure you have painkillers ready, anti inflammatories are best for this. Speak to your pharmacist or GP about your options.

Other tips for relieving pain include using hot water bottles, taking a bath, and wearing loose clothing.



Medical Abortion- What to expect

Within 4 to 6 hours of taking the second tablet, the lining of your womb will break down. This will cause bleeding. For most women the pregnancy will leave your body.

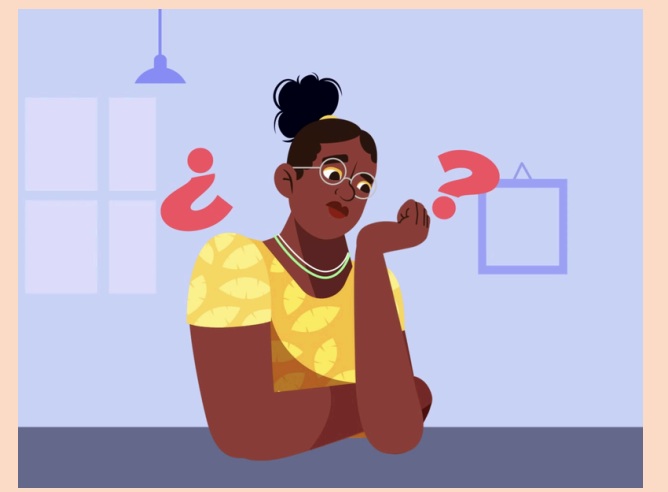
If you are 9 to 12 weeks, you will have to stay at the hospital while this happens.

For others it may be quicker or may take longer. It can sometimes take a few days.

You may see large blood clots or tissue at the time of the abortion.

Under 8 weeks, you are only likely to see the sac where the early pregnancy is developing.

Consider purchasing the pads for heavy bleeding and large dark underwear as heavy bleeding is to be expected.



Surgical Abortion- What to expect

You will always have a surgical abortion in a hospital.

You will not normally have a surgical abortion if you are under 9 weeks pregnant.

But your doctor can advise it under special circumstances depending on your medical history.

The type of surgical abortion used in Ireland is called vacuum aspiration. This uses suction to remove pregnancy from the womb.

You will be given medicine to put in your vagina to soften the cervix (entrance to the womb) 3 to 4 hours before the procedure.

You will lie on a bed with supports for your legs. A doctor or nurse will offer you sedation before the procedure begins.

You will either be given a local anesthetic to numb the area or general anesthetic to put you asleep.

An instrument called a speculum will be put into your vagina. This holds the walls of the vagina open so the cervix can be seen by the doctors.

Your cervix will be gently widened using thin rods called dilators and a tube will be inserted through the cervix and into the uterus (womb). The pregnancy is removed from the womb using suction.

Pregnancy tissue will be disposed of according to the hospital's policy. This will be explained to you when sign your consent form.

If your blood type is rhesus negative, you will have to get an anti-D injection.

Recovery

Most people return to normal activities within a day or two and strenuous activity should be avoided for a week.

This depends on the person however, and you should listen to your body. Taking time off work or school to rest is advised where possible.

After an abortion a person may experience:

- abdomen cramps
- menstrual like pain
- vaginal bleeding or spotting for up to 4 weeks
- nausea, diarrhea and fatigue

You may also experience some emotional side effects, this is completely normal and there are supports available.

You should consider waiting 1-2 weeks to have sex to allow for healing. You can also get pregnant immediately after an abortion.

Supports available

My options is a free phone helpline (1800 828 010). They provide information and support on all options on abortions and pregnancy support. They are available to support you during your abortion and answer any questions or concerns you may have.

The Irish family planning association (ifpa) offers free confidential and non-judgemental counselling for before and after an abortion.

CONTRACEPTION LINKS

[Sexual Wellbeing.ie](#)

[My_contraception.ie](#)

[Free contraceptive scheme](#)

[Order free condoms](#)

[Family Planning Limerick](#)

STI TESTING

[Testing at GOSHH](#)

[SH24 at GOSHH](#)

[GOSHH SH:24 guidelines](#)

[SH:24 order online](#)

[STI Clinic Limerick](#)

[STI Clinic Nenagh](#)

[STI Clinic Ennis](#)

[Sexual Wellbeing.ie - STI's](#)

Abortion Care

[My Options Helpline](#)

[Abortion Information HSE](#)

[Irish Family Planning Association Supports](#)

[Family Planning Limerick](#)