

What You Should Know About ...

Birth Control Methods

How do birth control methods work?

Birth control methods work in one of several ways:

- by stopping the woman's ovaries from releasing an ovum (egg)
- by preventing the man's sperm and the woman's egg from meeting
- by thinning the lining of the uterus so that a fertilized egg doesn't stick to it.

How do I decide what birth control method to use?

You can answer the following questions to help you decide which method(s) to use:

- How does the method work?
- Do I need to see a health care provider to get it?
- How well does the method work to prevent pregnancy?
- Does the method help prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs)?
- What are the advantages and disadvantages of the method?
- Is there anything about the method that will discourage me from using it correctly?
- Do I have any health problems that I need to think about when choosing a method?
- Does the provincial health care plan pay for it? If not, can I afford the cost?
- Will my partner pay for part of the cost?
- What are my birth control needs at this time in my life? How do I feel about an unplanned pregnancy?
- How often do I have sex? Will I remember to have my method with me every time I have sex?
- Can I talk to my partner about birth control? Will my partner support my choice?
- Do I use drugs (including alcohol) that might cause me to take risks?
- Am I opposed to any methods because of personal beliefs?

What kinds of birth control are there?

There are many different methods of birth control. Some do not require a prescription. You can buy them at a pharmacy (drugstore), large grocery store, or on-line:

- Male condom
- Female condom
- Spermicides
- Contraceptive sponge
- Cervical caps
- Emergency Contraceptive Pill (for emergency use)

You must see your health care provider for other methods of birth control:

- The Pill
- The Patch
- Diaphragm
- Injection (Depo-provera)
- IUD or IUS
- Vaginal Ring
- Tubal Ligation
- Vasectomy

Where can I get more information?

- From your health care provider, community health clinic, or public health nurse.
- From the Facts of Life On-Line: e-mail your questions to thefactsoflife@serc.mb.ca.
- From websites: www.sexualityandu.ca or www.serc.mb.ca.