















Contraception is an important, normal part of life, but when was the last time you checked your choice to ensure you are on the best method to fit with your lifestyle? Preparing for your doctor or nurse appointment in advance is a good way to make sure you're involved in decisions about your contraception. After all, it's your body. Check all the options available below and talk to your doctor or nurse about which might be best for you.

The choices	Efficacy & advantages	Main drawbacks	How often do you take it?
Short-Acting hormonal contraception			
 <p>Combined pills Tablet containing estrogen and progestogen</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 99% or more when used correctly • Useful for young healthy women who can reliably take pill • Works mainly by preventing egg release 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not suitable for women with conditions such as high blood pressure • Not suitable for women over 35 who smoke 	Daily
 <p>Progestogen-only pills Tablet containing only progestogen Two types available</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 96–99% when used correctly • Suitable for women who do not want to or cannot take estrogen <p>Two types available:</p> <p>Type 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works mainly by preventing egg release • In case of missed pill, can be taken up to 12 hours late <p>Type 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Works mainly by preventing sperm entering the womb • In case of missed pill, must be taken within 3 hours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many women have changes in menstrual pattern • Does not consistently prevent egg release • Many women have changes in menstrual pattern 	Daily
 <p>Contraceptive patch Patch containing estrogen and progestogen</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 99% or more when used correctly • Applied once a week for 3 weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be seen on the skin • Not suitable for women with conditions such as high blood pressure • Unsuitable for women over 35 who smoke 	Weekly
 <p>Contraceptive ring Flexible ring which is placed inside the vagina Contains progestogen and lowest daily dose of estrogen</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 99% or more when used correctly • Only needs to be replaced once a month • No need to remember a daily pill • Not affected by vomiting or diarrhoea • Self-inserted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to learn how to insert • Not suitable for women over 35 who smoke • Not suitable for women with conditions such as high blood pressure 	Monthly
Short-Acting non-hormonal contraception			
 <p>Condoms Barrier method that the man or woman can use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When used correctly, around 98% for male condoms and 95% for female condoms • Avoids hormones • Offers protection against sexually transmitted infections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting them on can involve interruption of intercourse • The male condom can split or rupture • The female condom can be pushed aside 	As and when
 <p>Diaphragms/caps Barrier methods that you fit inside the vagina to cover the cervix</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective in 92–96% of women when used correctly • Useful for those who wish to avoid hormones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves forward planning or interruption of intercourse • Can be messy as you need to use spermicide as well 	As and when
 <p>Natural methods Recognising the fertile and infertile times of your cycle to plan when you should avoid intercourse</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 94–99% with perfect use when intercourse is restricted to the time after ovulation • Avoids devices or hormones • Can be used at all stages of reproductive life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can take up to 6 months to learn effectively • Stress or illness can make the method unreliable • Need to avoid intercourse at certain times of the month and be highly motivated 	As and when
The choices	Efficacy & advantages	Main drawbacks	How often do you take it?
Long-Acting hormonal contraception			
 <p>Contraceptive implant Small flexible rod which is placed just under the skin Contains progestogen only</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 99% effective • Effective and rapidly reversible method of contraception • Useful for women who cannot remember their contraceptive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many women have changes in menstrual patterns • Insertion and removal must be performed by trained healthcare professionals 	Every 3 years
 <p>Contraceptive injections Injection containing progestogen</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 99% effective • Useful for women who cannot remember their contraceptive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot be immediately reversed in event of side effects • Many women have changes in menstrual patterns • Can take some time for fertility to return to normal 	Every 2-3 months
 <p>Intrauterine system (IUS) Intrauterine device that is fitted into the womb Contains progestogen only</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 99% effective • Effective and rapidly reversible method of contraception • Useful for women who cannot remember their contraceptive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many women have changes in menstrual patterns • Insertion and removal must be performed by trained healthcare professionals 	Every 5 years
Long-Acting non-hormonal contraception			
 <p>Intrauterine device (IUD) Intrauterine device that is fitted into the womb</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 98–99% effective • Women who want longer term contraception or who do not want to take hormones • Useful for women who cannot remember their contraceptive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periods may become heavier, longer or more painful • Insertion and removal must be performed by trained healthcare professionals 	Every 5-10 years
 <p>Sterilisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 99% effective • Permanent method of contraception that involves no hormones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannot be easily reversed • Involves an operation • Male sterilisation is not effective immediately 	Permanent