



Fact Sheet

2005

Student Health Services Texas A&M University

Personal Considerations when Choosing a Method of Birth Control

When looking to get on birth control, ask yourself the following questions to help you decide which method is best for you:

Will it protect me from Sexually Transmitted Infections?

- Many of the hormonal methods offer no protection from STIs. The barrier methods such as the diaphragm with spermicide and the male and female condoms will.

Will it interrupt lovemaking and does that matter?

How often do you use it?

- Some hormonal methods, such as the birth control pill, must be taken at the same time within two hours every single day. The depo provera shot can be taken once every three months while the Lunelle shot is a monthly dose.

Is privacy important to me?

Is cost an issue?

- Methods of birth control can be expensive, depending on which method you choose. Hormonal methods need a physician appointment so in addition to the cost of the prescription, there is a cost to see a physician. Condoms can be purchased at the [Student Health Center](#) for ten condoms at a price of \$10.

Is my partner willing to help pay for it?

Do I smoke?

- Women who smoke and take hormonal methods of contraception have an increased risk of developing blood clots, which can be fatal.

Am I allergic to anything?

- Women or men who are allergic to latex will not be able to use latex condoms as their method of contraception.

Is the effectiveness rate an issue for me?

- Each method has a different effectiveness rate. Many hormonal methods, if taken perfectly, can be from 97-99% effective. Meaning, that even with perfect use, 1-3 women will still get pregnant after a year of being on the method. Male condoms are any where from 75-98% effective, depending on user failure (i.e. condom broke, was put on wrong, etc.).

Does it have to be prescribed by a physician?

- Hormonal methods must be prescribed by a physician. The diaphragm also must be prescribed and then refitted with weight gain or loss.

Will the method embarrass my partner or me?

- If purchasing condoms is embarrassing, then maybe they are not the right choice for you.

If this method makes me stop menstruating, is that an issue?

- Some women like not having a period. Women on depo provera and some birth control pills such as Seasonale, may not menstruate at all or have sporadic periods. Other women like the reassurance of a monthly period to assure they are not pregnant.

Is it convenient?

- If having to go to the doctor to get birth control is inconvenient, then perhaps the hormonal methods are not the choice for you.

Does it have to be used prior to sex?

- The diaphragm must be inserted prior to intercourse.

Will I have trouble remembering to use this method?

- The oral contraceptive pill must be taken at the same time every single day for it to be most effective.

Do I want to get pregnant any time soon?

- Some methods such as depo provera may take several months for fertility to return once the method is discontinued.

Am I afraid of using this method?

- The diaphragm and nuva ring must be inserted into the vagina and removed. If you are not comfortable inserting your fingers into your vagina then perhaps these are not the best choices for you.

Will I enjoy intercourse less because of this method?

- If having a nuva ring or diaphragm in your vagina makes you enjoy sex less, then maybe there is a better choice for you.

Is my age and/or stage of life a factor?

- The older you are, the more risk you have at developing blood clots if you are on the hormonal methods.