CONTRACEPTIVE OPTIONS
Which one is best for me?

family planning victoria
Reproductive & Sexual Health Care. Education. Advocacy.
The City of Greater Dandenong and Family Planning Victoria wish to acknowledge the young women from the Greater Dandenong young mum’s playgroup who identified the need to develop this contraceptive resource.

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Read this first ...

**The contraceptive implant and IUD** (Intra-Uterine Device) are much better at protecting against pregnancy than other reversible methods of contraception.

**Most people don’t get side-effects.**
Some side-effects may settle with time.

**A change in bleeding** (periods) can be a side effect of all the methods containing hormones. Treatment options are available.

**Fertility** (ability to become pregnant) goes back to normal quickly after stopping the implant, IUD, ring or the contraceptive pill, no matter how long it has been used. The injection may take longer.

**Only condoms** protect against STIs (Sexually Transmissible Infections) as well as pregnancy.

The word ‘effective’ means how well the method works to prevent pregnancy for a typical user.

See your doctor, nurse or Aboriginal Health Worker before deciding on any method of contraception. Some health conditions or medications may make a method unsuitable for some people.
A flexible rod that releases a hormone called progestogen. Inserted under the skin on the inside of the upper arm by a specially trained doctor or nurse.

**Contraceptive Implant**

- Reversible
- Protects against pregnancy more than 99.95% effective
- Lasts up to 3 YEARS
- Does NOT protect against STI

**Good to know...**

- Protects against pregnancy very well.
- Long lasting. Don’t have to remember to take something daily.
- Can be removed at any time and fertility returns quickly.
- Bleeding will change. It might be more often, at irregular (odd) times or not at all. It may make bleeding less painful.
- Safe if breastfeeding.
IUD
(Intra-Uterine Device)
Copper or Hormonal Types

- Reversible
- Protects against pregnancy
- More than 99% effective
- Lasts up to 5-10 years*
- Does NOT protect against STI

A small plastic T-shaped device with a nylon string at the end. Inserted into the uterus (womb) by a specially trained doctor or nurse.

*Lasts for 5 to 10 years, depending on the type of IUD

Good to know...

- Protects against pregnancy very well.
- Long lasting. Don’t have to remember to take something daily.
- Can be removed at any time and fertility returns quickly.
- Copper IUD may make bleeding heavier.
- Safe if breastfeeding.
- The Copper IUD can be used as emergency contraception. (see page 13)
Contraceptive Injection (Depo)

- Reversible
- Protects against pregnancy
- 96% effective
- Injection every 12 weeks
- Does NOT protect against STI

An injection given every 12 weeks containing a hormone called progestogen.

Good to know...

- Protects against pregnancy very well if injections are given every 12 weeks.
- Long lasting. Don’t have to remember to take something daily.
- Bleeding will change. It might be more often, at irregular (odd) times or not at all. It may make bleeding less painful.
- Safe if breastfeeding.
Combined Oral Contraceptive Pill
usually called ‘The Pill’

reversible protects against pregnancy 93% effective taken daily does NOT protect against STI

‘The Pill’ contains 2 hormones called oestrogen and progestogen. Need to remember to take the pill every day.

Good to know...

- Most packs have 21 hormone pills and 7 sugar pills or 24 hormone pills and 4 sugar pills.
- If taken more than 24 hours late, vomit or have severe diarrhoea, it might not work.
- It can be used to skip bleeding.
- It may make bleeding regular, shorter, lighter and less painful.
- It might make your skin (acne) better.
- Safe if breastfeeding and baby is over 6 weeks old.
A small, flexible ring that contains 2 hormones called oestrogen and progestogen. It sits inside the vagina for 3 weeks, slowly releasing hormones into the body.

*The ring is inserted by the user into the vagina and left in place for three weeks. It is then removed and a new ring inserted one week later.

### Good to know...

- Don’t have to remember to take something daily.
- It might not work if taken out during the 3 weeks.
- It may make bleeding regular, shorter, lighter and less painful.
- It can be used to skip bleeding.
- It might make skin (acne) better.
- Safe if breastfeeding and baby is over 6 weeks old.
The mini pill contains 1 hormone called progestogen. Need to remember to take the pill at the same time every day.

Good to know...

- Each pack has 28 hormone pills (there are no sugar pills).
- For most people it is not as good as the combined pill at protecting against pregnancy because it needs to be taken at the same time every day.
- If taken more than 3 hours late, vomit or have severe diarrhea, it might not work.
- It may make bleeding be more often, at irregular (odd) times or not at all.
- Safe if breastfeeding.
Condom
roll onto the penis

A very thin but strong latex or non-latex covering. It is rolled over a stiff (erect) penis before any skin to skin genital contact or sex. The condom comes in various sizes; it is not a one size fits all.

Good to know...

- Protects against STIs and pregnancy if used correctly every time.
- Non latex condoms are available for people with allergies.
- Oil based lubricant (e.g. Vaseline or baby oil) can damage latex condoms and should not be used.
- Always check the expiry date.
- Condoms can be bought at supermarkets, pharmacies, petrol stations and vending machines.
- Free condoms are sometimes available through a local youth service or community health centre.
- Safe if breastfeeding.
Condom
insert into the vagina

A very thin but strong non-latex pouch with a flexible ring at the end that is put inside the vagina.

Good to know...

- Protects against STIs and pregnancy if used correctly every time.
- Often needs to be bought online as not available at most shops.
- Need to practice putting it in the right way and making sure the penis goes inside the condom and not between the condom and vagina.
- Safe if breastfeeding.
A silicone cup shaped diaphragm called Caya® is available at pharmacies. It fits inside the vagina and covers the cervix (entrance to the womb).

**Good to know...**

- It is used with Caya® diaphragm gel.
- Comes in one size and it fits most users.
- Leave in for minimum of 6 hours after last ejaculation.
- It can be purchased without a prescription. It is a good idea to see a doctor or nurse to check it fits and is covering the cervix.
- Safe to use if breastfeeding but cannot be used in first 6 weeks after giving birth.
Fertility Awareness Based Methods

This uses the changes that happen in the body every month as a guide to know when it is safe or unsafe to have sex.

*Don’t have intercourse (vaginal sex) or alternatively use another method of contraception on fertile days to protect yourself against pregnancy.

Good to know...

- Need to be aware of the changes that happen in the body every day.
- Need to be taught properly so you can track the changes and make safe choices about protecting against pregnancy.
- It is hard to use if bleeding comes at odd times or if breastfeeding or close to starting menopause.
- Can use natural fertility awareness to help get pregnant.
Emergency Contraception (EC)

There are two types of EC, copper IUD and EC pill.

- A copper IUD is a form of emergency contraception that protects best against pregnancy. It can also give long lasting protection against pregnancy if left in.
- The EC pill is sometimes known as the “morning after pill”.
- The EC pill is not an abortion pill. If the EC pill doesn’t work it is not known to harm the pregnancy.
- The EC pill can be bought from the pharmacy without a prescription.
- There are two types of EC pill available. One type is safe to use if you are breastfeeding.

A copper IUD or an EC pill can be used to help avoid getting pregnant if you have vaginal sex without contraception or the condom broke or slipped.

*Use EC as soon as possible, ideally within 24 hours of having vaginal sex, but it can still work within 120 hours (5 days).
Permanent Contraception – Sterilisation

**Vasectomy**
Where the tubes that carry the sperm are cut under local or general anaesthetic.

**Tubal Ligation**
Where a clip is put on the fallopian tubes through a small cut in the tummy under general anaesthetic.

**Good to know...**
- Sterilisation protects against pregnancy very well and can’t usually be reversed.
- Vasectomy and tubal ligation don’t usually need an overnight stay in a hospital.
- Vasectomy takes at least 3 months to work.
- Tubal ligation starts working straight away.
- You might need to pay for sterilisation.