



# Birth Control THE CHOICE IS YOURS

You can decide if and when to have children. If this is not the right time for you and your partner to have a baby, there are ways you can prevent pregnancy. The surest way to prevent a pregnancy is to not have sexual intercourse. But if you do have sex, you can choose to use one of the birth control methods listed below:

- Male or female condoms
- Spermicide
- Diaphragm
- Birth control pills
- Depo (or "the shot")
- Patch
- Vaginal ring
- Implant
- IUD
- Natural family planning
- Cycle beads
- Emergency contraception

**Which one is best for you?** The best method of birth control is the one that you can use the right way every time you want to prevent pregnancy. To help you decide, think about what's right for you:

- How important is it that you don't get pregnant now? How well does it work?
- How often do you have sex? Is it planned or unplanned?
- How often will you need to use this method? Will you remember to take or use it every time?
- Is this method safe for you? Are there any side effects?
- Does it protect against HIV and STDs (sexually transmitted diseases)?
- Does your partner need to cooperate for the method to work?
- Would anyone be angry or try to hurt you for using birth control?
- Does this method fit with your religious or moral beliefs?
- Will you need a prescription or can you buy it at the pharmacy?
- How much does it cost? Will your health insurance cover it?
- How does it work? Will it be easy to use?
- Will you feel comfortable using it?
- Will you use it?

Your partner or parents may be able to help you choose what's right for you. You may want to try different methods to learn what works best for you and your partner. You can also ask your provider for help talking to your partner about using condoms or birth control.

If you are being forced to have sex, or are afraid that someone may harm you for using birth control to keep from getting pregnant, you can tell your provider or call someone for help.  
Rape Crisis Hotline: 1-800-841-8371; Spanish: 1-800-223-5001; TTY: 1-888-881-7130.

For more information about how effective a method is, what kinds of side effects it might have, and how to use it correctly, ask your doctor, nurse, midwife, or family planning counselor (health care provider). Or call 1-877-MA-SEX-ED (1-877-627-3933) or go to [www.mariatalks.com](http://www.mariatalks.com) to find a provider near you.

