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YOUR GUIDE TO BIRTH CONTROL

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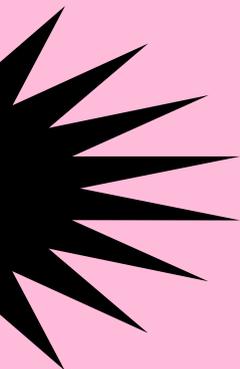
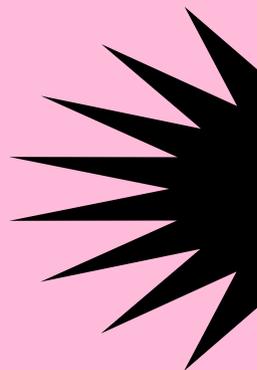
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction



WHO IS THIS FOR?

This manual is designed for college students who are seeking information about birth control options. Whether you are exploring contraception for the first time or just want to know more, this guide aims to provide you with the knowledge to help you make informed decisions regarding your reproductive health.

HOW DO I USE IT?

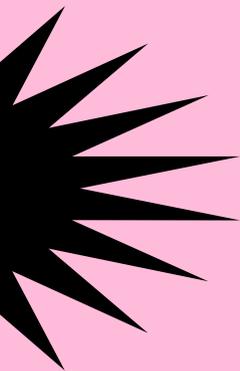
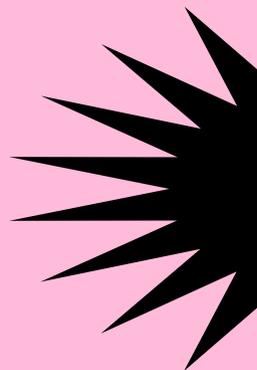
A wide range of birth control topics are covered throughout this manual including what it is, why it is important, the risks and benefits, different types, and misconceptions on the topic. It is intended to serve as an educational resource to help you understand your birth control options and to guide you in making informed decisions. Each section provides information, advice, and answers to common questions.

DISCLAIMER!

The information provided in this manual is for educational purposes and should not be taken as medical advice. It is essential to consult with a medical professional before making any decisions regarding birth control.

CHAPTER 2

BIRTH CONTROL BASICS



WHAT IS IT?

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- Birth control, also known as contraception, is used to prevent pregnancy.
- There are many different types including medicine, devices, or surgery.
- The goal is to provide individuals with options to manage their reproductive health according to their personal needs and lifestyle.

WHO SHOULD USE IT?

- Can be utilized by anyone who is sexually active and not intending to have a baby.
- It is important to understand that there is always a risk of pregnancy anytime you engage in unprotected sex!

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- Preventing unwanted pregnancies
- Managing menstrual symptoms and regulating menstrual cycles
- Protecting against STIs
- Maintaining independence: having access to birth control empowers individuals to make choices about their reproductive health

RISK STATISTICS

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Approximately 3 in 10 American girls become pregnant before age 20²

Parenthood is the leading reason that teen girls drop out of school³

Young adults between the ages of 15 to 24 account for nearly half of all new STIs infections each year¹

Less than 2% of teen moms earn a college degree by age 30³

**TAKE CONTROL
OF YOUR
REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH!**

A sexually active teen who doesn't use contraceptives has a 90% chance of becoming pregnant within a year³

Use this acronym to make decisions about birth control feel **EASIER** ⁴

- 1. Ease of use:** How simple is the method to use consistently?
 - 2. Age:** Is the method appropriate for your current stage of life? Younger individuals may prioritize ease of use and reversibility while older adults may consider long-term options.
 - 3. Side effects:** Are there potential side effects associated with the method?
 - 4. Infection Prevention:** Does the method protect against sexually transmitted infections?
 - 5. Effectiveness:** What is the method's success rate in preventing pregnancy?
 - 6. Risks:** Are there any previous health conditions or health risks that could affect your choice?
- ★ **Choosing the right type of contraceptive is a personal decision that depends on various factors. Consider these guiding questions as you read through this technical manual.**

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CHAPTER 3

STIGMA, MYTHS AND HOW TO START THE
CONVERSATION

STIGMA AROUND BIRTH CONTROL

“A GIRL WHO USES CONTRACEPTION IS PROMISCUOUS”

01.

FALSE. Individuals have many reasons for choosing to use contraception. Including: pregnancy prevention, reducing the risk of STDs and STIs, and even managing medical condition like endometriosis or PCOS.³

“A GIRL WHO CARRIES CONDOMS HAS MANY SEXUAL PARTNERS ”

02.

FALSE. Carrying condoms shows an individual's level of responsibility when it comes to safe sexual practices.³

“ONLY MARRIED WOMEN ARE DESERVING OF CONTRACEPTION COMPARED TO UNMARRIED WOMEN”

03.

FALSE. Everyone should have access and the ability to access any form of contraception or birth control.³



HOW TO START THE CONVERSATION

Starting the conversation is important, but can be difficult.

Here are some general tips that can be helpful in opening the discussion with different people in your life.

WITH YOUR PARENTS

- Plan a time where you can have an open conversation. ²
- Have a good knowledge on birth control and the type you are looking to use.
- Be honest and open
- Listen to their opinions and advice

WITH YOUR PARTNER/S

- It is important to discuss contraception use with any partner/partners you have sexual relationships with. ²
- It is important to discuss STD/STI screening and testing before becoming sexually active.
- Discuss what form of birth control you and your partner are comfortable using.

WITH YOUR HEALTHCARE PROVIDER

- Explain why you want to go on birth control.
 - sexual activity, controlling menstrual cycle/hormones.
- Discuss the best form of birth control for you
 - Determine if oral contraception or an implant/IUD/patch/ring would be more effective for you.
- Learn about potential side effects of each birth control.
- Discuss medical history
- Listen to their opinions and advice ⁴

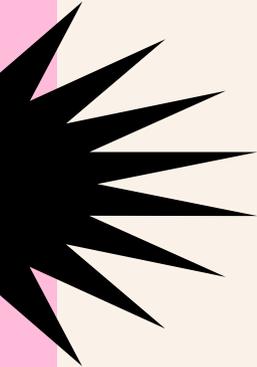
WITH FRIENDS

- Casually bring up the topic around friends to normalize the discussion and reduce the stigma.
- Listen to their personal experiences with various birth controls and any side effects they have experienced.

MYTHS AROUND BIRTH CONTROL



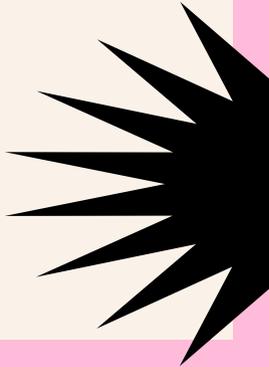
01. BIRTH CONTROL WILL MAKE YOU GAIN WEIGHT



False. There is not enough evidence to determine that birth control has a significant influence on weight gain. There can be a temporary increase in water retention which may mimic weight gain but this is minimal and typically goes away within 2 to 3 months. ⁶

02. THE PILL PROTECTS YOU FROM STDS/STIS

False. The only forms of contraception that are capable to reducing contraction of STIs or STDs is abstinence or the correct use of condoms (either male or female condoms).¹



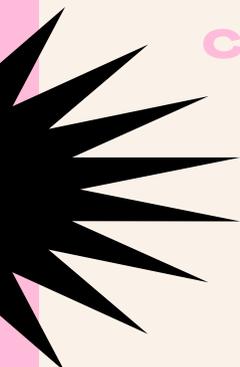
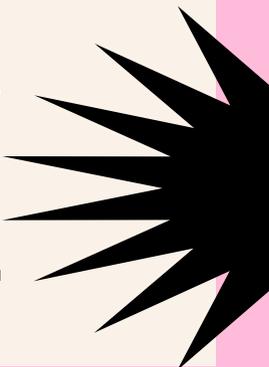


03. BIRTH CONTROL PILLS CAUSE CANCER

False. There is not enough evidence to determine that oral contraception is capable of causing cancer development. Typically patients who develop cancer while taking the pill have family history of cancer. ¹

04. BIRTH CONTROL WILL AFFECT YOUR ABILITY TO HAVE CHILDREN IN THE FUTURE

False. Birth control does not affect your ability to have children in the future. There is a slight chance that the added hormones may take a few months to get of your system but after you are capable of being fertile and having children. ¹



05. YOU DON'T NEED BIRTH CONTROL IF YOUR PARTNER PULLS OUT

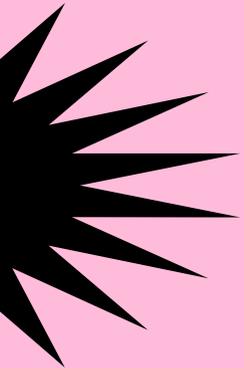
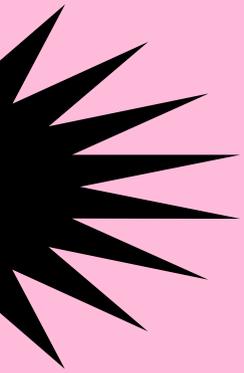
False. The pull out method is not an effective form of birth control. Sperm can still be present in pre-ejaculate fluid that is released before ejaculation. This can lead to a potential pregnancy. ⁷

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CHAPTER 4

Different types of Contraception



DIFFERENT TYPES OF CONTRACEPTION

CHOOSING A METHOD OF BIRTH CONTROL CAN BE DIFFICULT. WHEN CHOOSING CONTRACEPTION, IT IS IMPORTANT TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE EFFECTIVENESS, SIDE EFFECTS, COST, AND WHETHER THEY PREVENT STIS.

HORMONAL BIRTH CONTROL

- Prevents pregnancy by changing the levels of hormones in the body.
- Contains estrogen and/or progesterone that block the release of eggs from the ovaries, thinning the uterus lining, or thickening the mucus in the cervix.⁵

NON-HORMONAL BIRTH CONTROL

- Non-hormonal contraception reduces the risk of pregnancy in ways that do not alter a woman's hormones.⁴

PERMANENT CONTRACEPTIVE

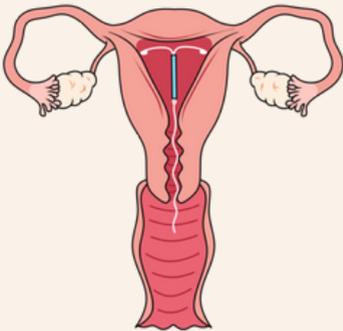
- This form of contraception involves making a person incapable of reproduction which is done by removing or blocking the fallopian tubes.⁴

EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVE

- Prevents pregnancy and it is not intended for regular contraceptive use but rather as a backup option in emergencies.³

WOMEN

Hormonal Contraception



1. Hormonal Intrauterine device (IUD)

- A T-shaped device placed in the uterus, releases progesterone.²
- Over 99% effective
- Side effects: risk of uterine perforation, infection

2. Implant

- Small rod placed under the skin of the arm, releases hormones.¹
- Over 99% effective
- Side effects: Blood clots



3. Contraceptive injection/shot

- Hormone shot administered every 3 months²
- 94% effective
- Side effects: long-term use can lead to bone density loss

4. The pill

- Daily oral contraceptives containing hormones²
- 91% effective
- Side effects: Blood clots, hypertension, stroke



5. Skin Patch

- A patch worn on the skin that releases hormones²
- 91% effective
- Side effects: Skin irritation, redness, rash

6. Vaginal Ring

- flexible ring inserted into the vagina, releasing hormones.³
- 91% effective
- Side effects: Blood clots, hypertension, stroke





4. Sponge with spermicide

- foam sponge inserted into the vagina, releasing spermicide ²
- 76–88% effective
- Side effects: Toxic shock syndrome (rare)

5. Cervical cap with spermicide

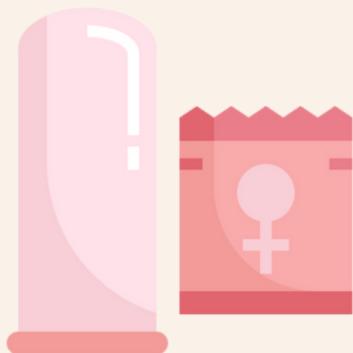
- Cap that fits over the cervix, used with spermicide ²
- 71–86% effective
- Side effects: Toxic shock syndrome (rare)



6. Anti-sperm vaginal contraceptives

- Gels, foams, or films that kill sperm. ²
- 72–86% effective
- Side effects: Allergic reaction

Non-Hormonal Contraception

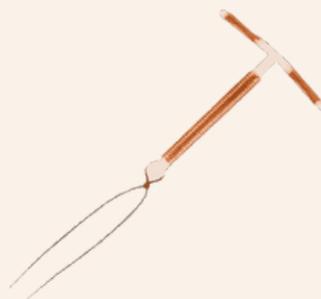


1. Female condom

- Worn inside the vagina to block sperm³
- 79% effective
- Side effects: Allergy to latex

2. Copper IUD

- Non-hormonal T-shaped device placed in the uterus
- Over 99% effective³
- Side effects: Uterine perforation, infection



3. Diaphragm with spermicide

- Dome-shaped cup covering the cervix, used with spermicide³
- 88% effective
- Side effects: Toxic shock syndrome (rare)



Permanent Contraception



1. Sterilization surgery for women

- Blocks or removes fallopian tubes¹
- Over 99% effective
- Side effects: Infection

Emergency Contraception

1. Levonorgestrel (Morning after pill eg. Plan B)

- A pill taken within 72 hours of unprotected sex¹
- 89%



2. Ulipristal Acetate

- A prescription pill taken within 5 days.¹
- 85%

MEN

Non-Hormonal Contraception



1. Male Condom

- Barrier worn on the penis to block sperm ¹
- 87% effective
- Side effects: Latex reaction if allergic

Permanent Contraception

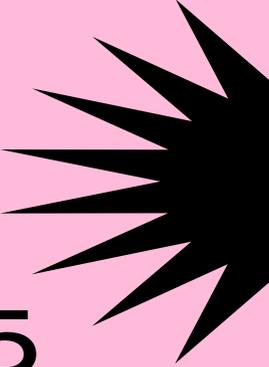
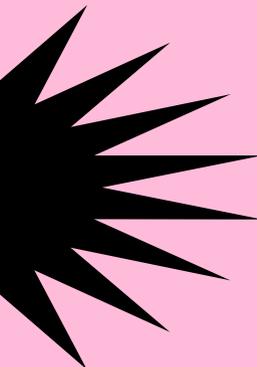
1. Sterilization surgery for men (Vasectomy)

- Minor surgical procedure that blocks sperm ¹
- Over 99% effective
- Side effects: Chronic pain



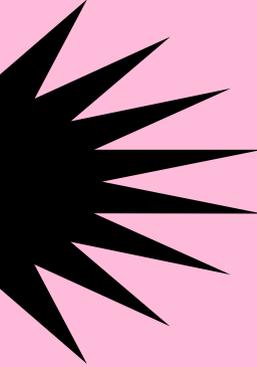
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CHAPTER 5

Side Effects and Choosing
the Birth Control That Is Best
For You



Short-term side effects of Hormonal Birth Control

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HEADACHE

BIRTH CONTROL, HEADACHES, AND MIGRAINE EPISODES ARE LINKED. THESE ISSUES ARE DUE TO VOLATILE LEVELS OF ESTROGEN.¹

SLEEP

BIRTH CONTROL IMPACTS THE SLEEP-WAKE CYCLE DUE TO ALTERING LEVELS OF ESTROGEN AND PROGESTERONE. INCREASED LEVELS OF PROGESTERONE CAN CAUSE DROWSINESS AND DECREASE SLEEP LATENCY.¹

NAUSEA

HORMONES THAT CONTAIN ESTROGEN CAN IRRITATE THE STOMACH LINING AND SLOW DIGESTION. ESTROGEN CAN ALSO INCREASE STOMACH ACID PRODUCTION WHICH CAN LEAD TO NAUSEA.¹

MOOD

HEALTHY WOMEN WHO USE ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES HAVE 9-12% LOWER GLOBAL BRAIN SEROTONIN 4 RECEPTOR BINDING POTENTIAL COMPARED TO NON-USERS. THIS LOWER BINDING POTENTIAL IS A MOLECULAR MECHANISM BY WHICH HORMONAL CONTRACEPTIVES CAN BE ASSOCIATED WITH INCREASED RISKS OF HAVING NEGATIVE MOODS.¹

STRESS

HORMONAL BIRTH CONTROL CAN INCREASE CORTISOL (STRESS HORMONE) BY SUPPRESSING THE PRODUCTION OF TESTOSTERONE. THIS CAN AFFECT THE BODY'S ABILITY TO REGULATE STRESS, WHICH MAY BE LINKED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF STRESS-RELATED DISORDERS LIKE DEPRESSION.²

ACNE

PROGESTIN CAN INCREASE THE PRODUCTION OF SEBUM, AN OILY SUBSTANCE NATURALLY PRODUCED ON THE FACE THAT CAN LEAD TO CLOGGED PORES AND ACNE.¹

Long-term side effects of **Hormonal Birth Control**

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NUTRITIONAL DEFICIENCIES

ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES ARE ASSOCIATED WITH LOWER LEVELS OF VITAMINS B6, C, B12, MAGNESIUM, SELENIUM, ZINC, AND FOLIC ACID.¹

CHANGES IN MENSTRUAL CYCLE

BIRTH CONTROL CAN CHANGE THE LENGTH AND REGULARITY OF THE MENSTRUAL CYCLE, USUALLY MAKING IT SHORTER. THERE CAN ALSO BE IRREGULAR BLEEDING.²

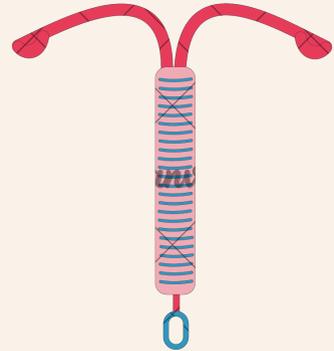
DEPRESSION

SOME WOMEN MAY FACE UP TO A 130% INCREASED RISK OF DEPRESSION, ESPECIALLY DURING THE FIRST TWO YEARS AFTER STARTING BIRTH CONTROL.³

Side effects of **Non-Hormonal Birth Control**

Copper IUD

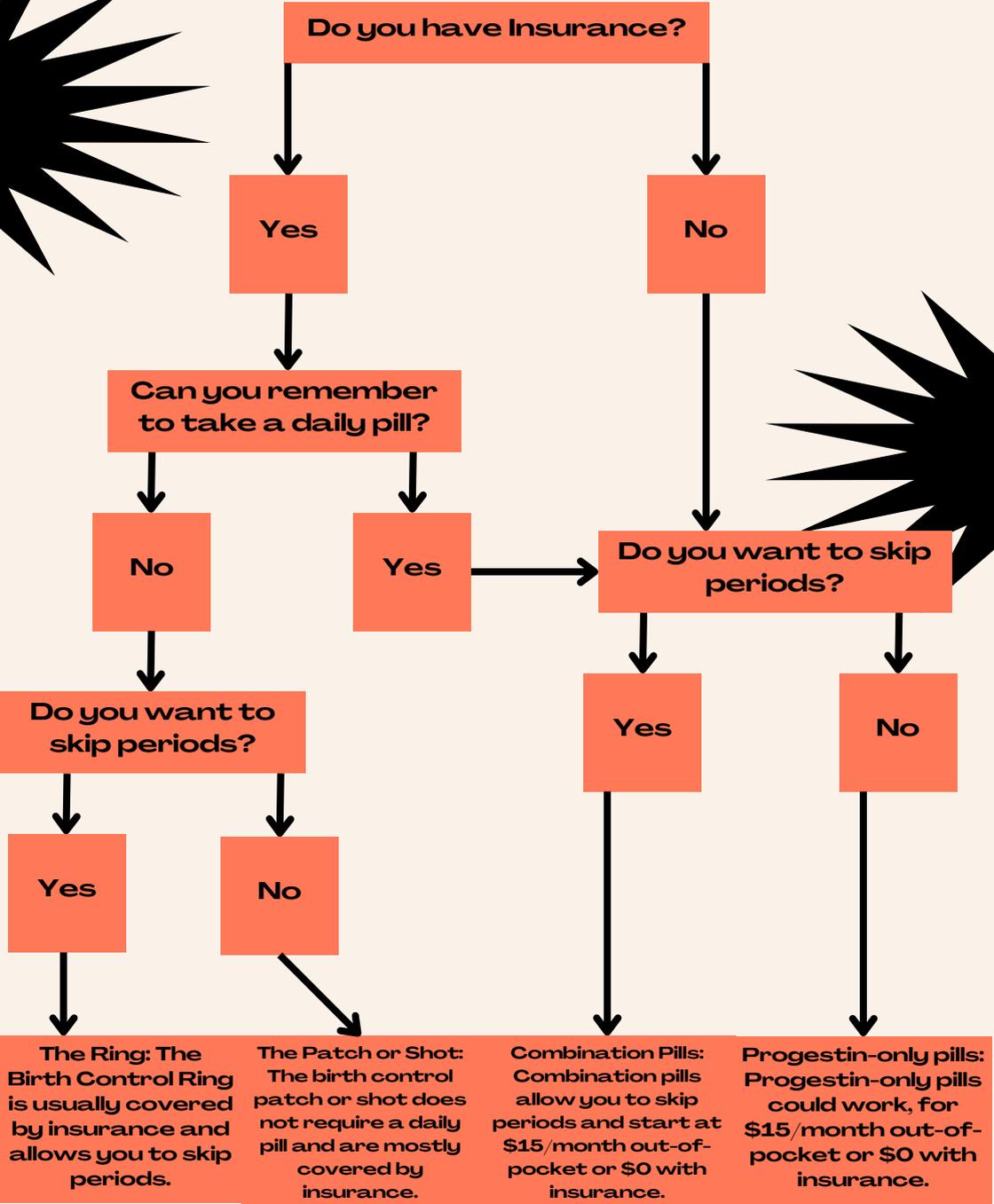
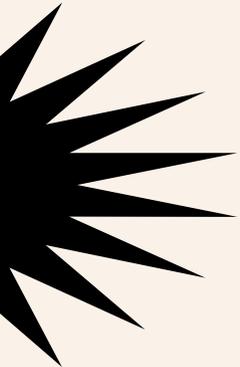
- Can cause pain in the lower stomach or back for a few days after it is fitted.⁶
- Can cause infection in rare cases.⁶
- Has potential to make periods heavier or more painful.⁶



Diaphragm

- Spermicide has the potential to irritate the vagina.⁵
- Increases the chances of getting a urinary tract infection (UTI).⁵

Which Birth Control is Best For You?



Do you have Insurance?

Yes

No

Can you remember to take a daily pill?

No

Yes

Do you want to skip periods?

Yes

No

Do you want to skip periods?

Yes

No

The Ring: The Birth Control Ring is usually covered by insurance and allows you to skip periods.

The Patch or Shot: The birth control patch or shot does not require a daily pill and are mostly covered by insurance.

Combination Pills: Combination pills allow you to skip periods and start at \$15/month out-of-pocket or \$0 with insurance.

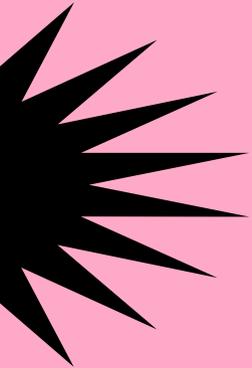
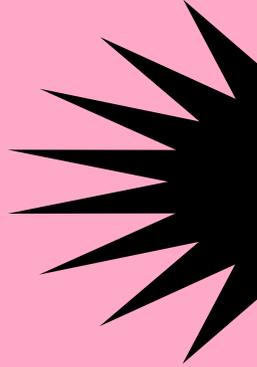
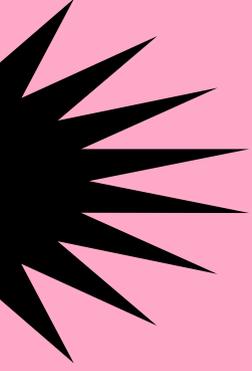
Progestin-only pills: Progestin-only pills could work, for \$15/month out-of-pocket or \$0 with insurance.

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CHAPTER 6

Resources

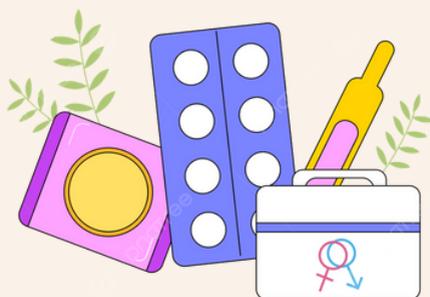


USEFUL RESOURCES

UGA RESOURCES

UGA Health Center

- Access to contraception counseling and prescriptions
- STI testing and treatment
- Free/low-cost condoms at Health Promotion Department or pharmacy



The Fontaine Center

- Sexual health education is available
- Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Office
 - Provides educational resources about consent, safe sex practices and healthy relationships.
- Counseling and psychiatric services
 - Provides support for students dealing with decisions about contraceptives as well as challenges with sexual health.

OTHER RESOURCES

- Planned Parenthood
 - <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/>
- Reproductive Rights
 - <https://reproductiverights.org/>



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CHAPTER SUMMARIES

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CHAPTER 1

This chapter introduces the purpose of the technical manual and explains how it should be used.

CHAPTER 2

This chapter gives a broad overview of the topic of birth control and why it is important.

CHAPTER 3

This chapter discusses the stigma and many myths behind birth control and the individuals that use it. It also gives advice on how to start the conversation.

CHAPTER 4

This chapter provides an overview of the various types of birth control, explaining how they work and their effectiveness.

CHAPTER 5

This chapter covers the short-term and long-term side effects of hormonal birth control, the side effects of non-hormonal birth control, and describes which birth control is best for you.

CHAPTER 6

This chapter provides useful resources for accessing birth control and related support services.