

There's nothing better than a bit of beauty therapy, whether it's your usual hair, nails, treatment... or something completely different; it's good to know you've got choices when it comes to your appearance. It's the same with contraception – you have lots of options that may meet your needs.

When it comes to being protected, most of us go for condoms or the pill. But you'd be amazed at the range of contraceptives available – all tailored to suit different lifestyles and routines. So get to know the facts and make an informed decision.

This little booklet outlines the 15 different methods of contraception. Almost all of them are 99% effective if used properly. What's more, some methods don't depend on you remembering to take them or use them to be effective. But remember, while they all greatly reduce the risk of an unplanned pregnancy, you need a condom too to protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

# Which is the one for you?

## Injection

A simple injection can protect you against pregnancy for 8 or 12 weeks, depending on the type. It could be right for you if you're not so good at remembering to take your pill.

## Implant

It's a small rod, inserted under the skin of the upper arm, that releases a hormone which protects against pregnancy. Once in place it will last for 3 years, but can be taken out sooner.

## Intrauterine System (IUS)

This small device is inserted into the womb and releases a hormone that will protect you from the risk of pregnancy for 5 years. Again, it can be taken out sooner.

## Vaginal Ring

You place this small, soft plastic ring inside your vagina and it lasts for 21 days. One ring provides contraception for a whole month.

## Intrauterine Device (IUD)

The IUD is also a small device that's inserted into the womb. But this option may be better for you if you have trouble taking hormones. Depending on the type, the IUD protects you from the risk of pregnancy for 3 to 10 years. Like the IUS and implant, it too can be taken out sooner.




## Contraceptive Patch

You wear this patch on your upper arm (or anywhere else where it won't be rubbed by tight clothing) and use 1 patch each week for 3 weeks, followed by a gap of 7 days. You don't have a proper period with the patch, so it could be a good option if you suffer from painful or heavy periods.


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## Combined Pill



Like the contraceptive patch, this tablet contains the hormones progesterone and oestrogen. It must be taken every day for 21 days, followed by a gap of 7 days. Again, as you don't have a proper period on the combined pill, it could be a good option if you suffer from painful or heavy periods.

## Progesterone Only Pill



This pill is used in a similar way to the combined pill. But unlike the combined pill, it doesn't contain oestrogen and has to be taken every day within a specific 3-hour window. It could be a good option if you can't take contraception containing oestrogen.

## Male Condom

This is worn on the man's penis to stop sperm from entering the vagina, and is discarded after use. Using condoms is the only way to protect against STIs as well as pregnancy.

## Female Condom

This is worn inside the vagina to stop sperm from entering the womb, and is also discarded after use. Using condoms is the only way to protect against STIs as well as pregnancy.

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## Diaphragm

This reusable circular dome is made of thin latex or silicone, and is inserted into the vagina before sex. It comes in a variety of sizes so you do need to be fitted for the correct size by a trained professional. Spermicide must be used with the diaphragm during sex.

## Cap

A cap is similar to a diaphragm, except smaller. Spermicide must also be used during sex.



## Natural Family Planning



This is a natural method that allows you to have sex without using contraception with a reduced risk of getting pregnant. It works by plotting the times of the month when you're fertile and when you're not. This method must only be practised following professional advice.

## Female Sterilisation

This is a permanent form of contraception and requires a minor medical operation. Reversing the process is difficult, so it's super-important to consider all your other options before deciding on sterilisation.

## Male Sterilisation

This is a simple medical operation to cut or block the tubes on a permanent basis. And the great news is it doesn't affect the man's ability to perform.





# Don't just take our word for it...




We asked some young women who have changed their method of contraception what they use now and why they changed. Take a look...

## Gemma – IUS


"I used to suffer from heavy and painful periods. When I left uni, I wanted to go travelling but was nervous about suffering from this while I was away. So I asked my local GP for advice and she suggested an IUS. Your periods are often lighter with an IUS, so having one allowed me to get on and enjoy my trip to the max."

## Christine – Implant


"I love my job as an air hostess. Travelling the world. Seeing amazing things. I used to take the pill – just because it seemed like the simplest option. But with the time difference in other countries, I sometimes found it difficult to work out when I should take it. Then a friend told me about the contraceptive implant, so I had a chat with the nurse at my family planning clinic. It was easier than I thought to have it inserted under my skin, and knowing I'm covered is a weight off my mind – plus it's one less thing to remember to pack."



## Laura – IUD



“I never forget anything. Remembering to take the pill wasn’t an issue for me, but it was making me feel funny. I spoke to my GP about it and it turns out there are hormones in the pill that don’t agree with some girls, it’s just a matter of chemistry. She recommended I switch to an IUD as they’re hormone-free. I did, and I feel like myself again. It’s brilliant!”

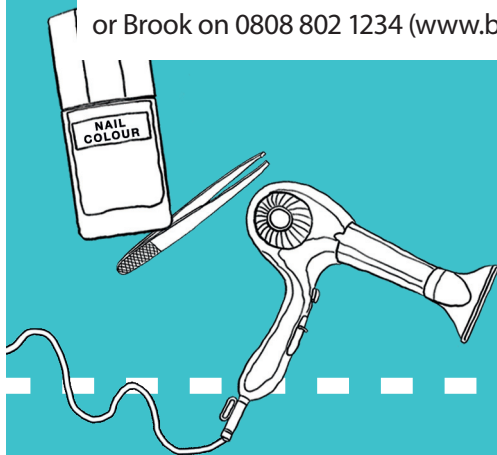


## Shahnaz – Injection

“Life’s pretty hectic as a career girl. Long hours and late nights. Remembering to take the pill was a bit of a hit-and-miss affair! That’s why my doctor suggested the contraceptive injection instead. It’s really easy to get it done and one injection lasts 12 weeks. So that’s one less thing to worry about.”

Now that you've seen just how many options there are, have a chat with your GP or local contraception (or family planning) clinic to find the contraceptive that meets your needs. All 15 methods outlined here are free on the NHS. And if you're chatting with a friend, suggest that they speak to their GP too.

To find out more, check out [www.nhs.uk/worhtalkingabout](http://www.nhs.uk/worhtalkingabout) or contact the FPA on 0845 122 8690 ([www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk)) or Brook on 0808 802 1234 ([www.brook.org.uk](http://www.brook.org.uk)).



**Contraception**  
worth talking about