

# Contraceptives

Contraceptives are a way to prevent pregnancy. There are different types of contraceptives, which act in different ways to stop pregnancy. **Condoms are the only contraceptive that act to prevent sexually transmissible infections (STIs).** The following list are examples of more common types of contraceptives available in Australia.

## Barrier Contraceptives

**What they are:** Condoms with water-based lubricant, female condoms

**What they do:** Condoms are the only contraceptives that can protect you and your partner from STIs, as they provide a physical barrier between your genitals. They can be used for vaginal, anal and oral sex to prevent STIs and pregnancy.

**More info:** Condoms come in different sizes, textures and materials to make sure they are most pleasurable for everyone. Using water-based lubricant with condoms can make sex more pleasurable and reduce the risk of condom breakage. You can get condoms and lubricant from supermarkets, convenience stores, pharmacies and sometimes in public toilets.

## Oral Contraceptive Pills

**What they are:** Pills swallowed by a woman, at about the same time every day.

**What they do:** Contraceptive pills have hormones in them. Different pills have different hormones, which do different things. Most commonly, they do either or both of the following: they either stop a woman from releasing eggs (ovulating), or they make the fluids at the opening of a woman's uterus thicker so that sperm can't get through to the egg.

**More info:** Your doctor needs to prescribe oral contraceptive pills and will talk to you about the options that are best for you.

## Contraceptive Implants or Injections

**What they are:** The contraceptive implant is a very small rod with hormones, which is injected into a woman's arm and can last for three years. Contraceptive injections are hormone injections, that need to be given by a doctor every 3 months.

**What they do:** The hormones work in the same way as the hormones given in the oral contraceptive pill, by stopping ovulation or making the fluid in the opening of the uterus thick to stop sperm.

**More info:** Talk to your doctor about the best contraceptive for you.

## Intrauterine Devices (IUD)

**What they are:** The IUD is a small piece of plastic that has either copper or hormones on it and is inserted into a woman's uterus by a doctor. It can last for 10 years, but can be removed if a woman wants to get pregnant or has unwanted side-effects.

**What they do:** The copper or hormones change the fluid in the uterus so that sperm cannot survive.

**More info:** Talk to your doctor about the best contraception for you.

## Emergency Contraceptive Pill (morning after pill)

**What they are:** A pill with hormones that is taken by a woman as soon as possible after having sex, if a condom has not been used or has broken and the woman does not use other contraceptives.

**What they do:** The hormones in the pill can delay or stop a woman's egg from releasing, so that it cannot be fertilised.

**More info:** The emergency contraceptive pill is not 100% effective and should not be used as a regular form of contraception. It is most effective when used as soon as possible (within 24 hours of having sex). It is generally not effective if taken after 4 days. In Australia you can get the emergency contraceptive pill at your pharmacy without a doctor's prescription.

Talk to your doctor about the best form of contraception for you.