

A BIRTH CONTROL GUIDE: FINDING THE BEST METHOD FOR YOU



QUESTIONNAIRE

The "best" method of birth control (BC) is the one that best suits your life and needs. Use this questionnaire and chart to determine a method that is right for you. Keep in mind that as your birth control needs change, the "best" method for you may change as well!

What do you want from your birth control? (Check all that apply)

- Prevent pregnancy
- Most effective
- Predictable period
- Reduce period flow
- Reduce PMS symptoms
- Reduce acne
- Prevent STIs

Do you want a hormonal or non-hormonal method?

- Hormonal
- Non-hormonal

How often are you willing to take it or manage it? (Check all that apply)

- Everyday
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Every three months
- Every 3-5 years
- Every 10 years

Do you want something short term or long term?

- Short term (lasts less than a year)
- Long term (lasts more than a year)

Do you plan on using your insurance?

- Yes, I plan to use my insurance
- No, I do not plan to use my insurance

INSURANCE

Insurance can be confusing. You may not be sure what your specific insurance plan covers and what you will have to pay for on your own.

Here are some tips that should help you get those answers and go into this process as informed as possible.

Questions to ask your insurance company about coverage:

- What types of birth control are covered? What about the IUD or Implant?
- Are they covered in full or will I need to pay a portion? *If so, how much?*
- Is there a deductible that needs to be met? *If so, how much?*

Are you on your parents'/guardians'/ partner's/other's insurance plan?

If so, they may receive the Explanation of Benefits (EOB) about your visit. This means that if you use their insurance, they may get a statement explaining the reason for your BC visit.

If you wish to keep your visit private, consider calling your insurance company and asking if the EOB can be sent to you OR consider paying out of pocket (not billing to your insurance), although this option will likely be more expensive.

NOTE: the University Health Center (UHC) does not accept Medicaid, Tri-Care Prime, or uninsured patients for long-acting reversible contraceptives (LARC) procedures (IUD/Implant). Students who are uninsured or have either of the two insurance providers can receive LARC procedures at local clinics - UHC can provide referrals if needed.

YOU'VE DECIDED ON A METHOD...NOW WHAT?

For those who have decided or already know which method they want, schedule a **Birth Control Start** appointment at myuhc.umd.edu or call Women's Health at (301) 314-8190.

A **pregnancy test** is recommended, and sometimes required, before starting any method of birth control. Please note the additional requirements for the following methods of choice:

IUD/Implant:

- Initial consult - call (301) 314-8190 to make the appointment
- After the consult, you will schedule the insertion appointment
- An up-to-date Pap test and Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) test (IUD only)

Shot:

- Initial consult - call (301) 314-8190 to make the appointment
- After the consult, you will schedule the initial injection appointment for sometime during the first 5 days of your period

Ring/Patch/Pill:

- BC start appointments for these methods can happen any time during your menstrual cycle and do not require a prep consult
- To schedule an appointment, visit myuhc.umd.edu or call (301) 314-8190
- Get a prescription from your healthcare provider
- Fill prescription at your preferred pharmacy

FAQs

Who do I schedule an appointment with if I want to start birth control but I don't know which method is best for me?

If you are unsure which method is best for you or you want to learn more about the many options available, call (301) 314-8184 to schedule a free birth control consultation with Sexual Health Coordinator Jenna B. Messman.

Do any birth control methods cause infertility?

All reversible birth control methods will aid in pregnancy prevention while being used, but none have any reported long-term effects on fertility.

If I plan to start a new birth control method, should I stop using my old method?

If you are planning to switch to a new method of birth control, it is recommended to continue to use your original method until you've talked with your healthcare provider, have a new prescription, and/or have another plan to prevent pregnancy in the interim.

What if I have side effects?

A small percentage of people experience side effects while using birth control. Side effects can vary in severity and frequency. If you are experiencing side effects and they become concerning or disruptive to you, please contact your healthcare provider immediately.

How long does it take for the birth control to be effective?

Most forms of birth control are not immediately effective. Talk with your healthcare provider about how long it will take for the medication to become effective. While you wait for the medication to become effective, condoms are a helpful tool to prevent pregnancy. Condoms are also recommended to provide STI protection, as all other forms of birth control do not provide any STI protection.

Which method of hormonal birth control is most effective?

The IUD, implant, shot, Nuvaring, patch, and birth control pills are all highly effective forms of birth control if used consistently and correctly. The methods with less likelihood for human error (IUD and implant) are more effective at preventing pregnancy. The IUD is very effective and has a non-hormonal option. Methods that are more susceptible to human error (pills, patch, Nuvaring) are less effective because there is a higher chance of forgetting to use them. All of these methods can be combined with condoms to increase effectiveness!

Does hormonal birth control cause weight gain?

No. Research shows that people using hormonal birth control and people not using hormonal birth control gain weight at the same rate. Many people start birth control at a time in their lives that it is common to gain weight, and they may attribute that to the medication. However, every person has unique side effects and if you are gaining weight in a way that is concerning to you, please speak with your healthcare provider.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Not sure which method is right for you?

Schedule a **FREE Birth Control Consultation:**

Jenna B. Messman
Sexual Health Coordinator
Call (301) 314-8184

Know what method you want and ready to get started?

Schedule a **Birth Control Start** or a **Birth Control Refill** appointment*:

myuhc.umd.edu
Women's Health (301) 314-8190

**Please use this brochure and/or the free consultation at UHC to help you decide which method is right for you BEFORE making an appointment with a healthcare provider.*

Once you have made an appointment, remember to complete your pre-visit questionnaire.

Presentations & Workshops

FREE Condoms & Safer Sex Supplies

Pregnancy Consultations & Referrals

Visit bedsider.org to learn more about the many birth control methods available to you.