

# CONTRACEPTION

**Contraception refers to the methods that are used to prevent pregnancy. Some methods of contraception can also be used to prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Contraception is FREE on the NHS for all ages... (Brook, [www.brook.org.uk/topics/contraception/](http://www.brook.org.uk/topics/contraception/))**

There are many different types of contraception available. Some contraception can be hormonal which means it can affect things like menstruation or mood. Some methods of contraception are also more invasive than other. This is not an exhaustive list, and it is really important you find a method that suits your needs and lifestyle.



## **Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARCs)**

eg. Implant, IUD/Coil and Injections

These are very effective and can last multiple years such as the **Implant** (lasts 3 years) or **IUD/Coil** (lasts 5-10 years) or multiple months like the **injection**, which is administered every 8-13 weeks. Some LARCs are hormone based but the copper coil is hormone free. These are available for free on the NHS.

## **Short Acting Hormonal Methods**

eg. the Pill, the Mini Pill, the Patch or the Vaginal Ring

The **Pill** and **Mini Pill** are both taken daily, and for maximum effectiveness they should be taken at the same time each day. The difference between these is that while the pill has oestrogen and progestogen, the mini pill only has progestogen. You therefore may sometimes hear them referred to as the Combined Pill and the Progestogen Only Pill.

The **patch** needs to be applied weekly for 3 weeks, followed by a patch free week, and **the ring** applied once a month also for three weeks followed by a ring free week.

These must be prescribed to you by a doctor.

## **Barrier Methods**

eg. Condoms

These are used during sex to prevent contact between the sperm and the egg. **Condoms** are available for purchase in most supermarkets and pharmacies but can also be obtained for free from your GP or sexual health clinics. Condoms protect you from STIs, but not all barrier methods do.

Other barrier methods include Internal Condoms which are worn inside vaginas, and Diaphragms (Caps) which are silicone domes inserted inside the vagina.

For more information on different forms of contraception and they may affect you go to [www.nhs.uk/contraception/](http://www.nhs.uk/contraception/)



# EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION

**Emergency contraception can stop you getting pregnant after unprotected sex (sex without contraception or when contraception might have failed).**  
(NHS, [www.nhs.uk/contraception/emergency-contraception/](http://www.nhs.uk/contraception/emergency-contraception/))

There are two types of emergency contraceptives:

## INTRAUTERINE DEVICE (IUD)

Can be fitted within 5 days (120 hours) after sex

Need to make an appointment to have an IUD fitted by a nurse or doctor, usually at a sexual health clinic or GP Surgery, but this is free

Can be left in as a usual method of contraception for 5-10 years

Usually more effective in preventing pregnancy as they can be used at any point during a menstrual cycle (Brook, [www.brook.org.uk/your-life/morning-after-pill/](http://www.brook.org.uk/your-life/morning-after-pill/))

## MORNING AFTER PILL

There are 2 main types of emergency pill used in the UK:

- levonorgestrel (brands include Levonelle) which you need to take within 3 days (72 hours) after sex
- ulipristal acetate (brands include ellaOne) which you need to take within 5 days (120 hours) after sex

Can be obtained for free from GP surgeries and Sexual Health Clinics. Some pharmacies will also provide it for free while at others you have to pay

Considered less effective as they will only work if an egg has not been released from the ovary (before ovulation)

**THE SOONER YOU ACCESS AND USE AN  
EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVE, THE MORE  
EFFECTIVE IT IS**

For more information regarding emergency contraceptives including what affects how effective they are and side effects, visit [www.brook.org.uk/your-life/morning-after-pill/](http://www.brook.org.uk/your-life/morning-after-pill/)

# WHAT ARE STI'S?

STIs are common and can be passed on during sex or through sexual contact. Examples include Chlamydia, HIV, gonorrhoea and genital herpes



Although they are not 100% guaranteed, when used correctly and consistently condoms are extremely effective in preventing STIs. It is recommended you use a condom any time you have any form of sexual activity - not just during vaginal intercourse.

## SYMPTOMS OF STI's

GENITALS ARE USUALLY WHAT IS AFFECTED BY THE FOLLOWING:

DISCHARGE

LUMPS OR SKIN GROWTHS

RASH

BLEEDING

BLISTERS, SORES OR WARTS

ITCHINESS

PAIN

If you think you may have been exposed to an STI, you should contact a sexual health clinic such as iCaSH. You do not usually need a GP referral or an appointment for a sexual health clinic, but contact the clinic first to check.

## TYPES OF TESTS FOR STI's

THE TEST AND THE LENGTH OF TIME IT WILL TAKE TO OBTAIN A RESULT WILL DEPEND ON THE STI THAT IS BEING TESTED FOR. TESTS ARE USUALLY ONE OF THE FOLLOWING

URINE TESTS

BLOOD TESTS

SWAB TESTS

PHYSICAL EXAMS

There are vaccines available for HPV, which protects against genital warts and cancers linked to HPV, as well as for Hepatitis B although this condition is rare in the UK ([NHS, www.nhs.uk/conditions/hepatitis-b/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/hepatitis-b/))

**DID YOU KNOW?** You can order a free home testing kit for chlamydia, gonorrhoea, HIV, and syphilis from iCaSH. You take your own samples (urine/swab/finger-prick blood) and post them back. Results are sent securely to you via text or online.

More advice on what to do, what symptoms to look out for and what to expect from an appointment at a sexual health clinic can be found on [www.nhs.uk/conditions/sexually-transmitted-infections-stis/](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/sexually-transmitted-infections-stis/)



# CONSENT

**To consent means to agree to something, and the word can be used in lots of different situations. When it comes to sex specifically, to consent means to agree to have sex or engage in sexual activity. .Sex or sexual activity can include kissing, sexual touching, oral, anal and vaginal sex with a penis or with any other type of object.**

*(Brook, [www.brook.org.uk/your-life/sex-and-consent/](http://www.brook.org.uk/your-life/sex-and-consent/))*

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 (England and Wales) defines consent as when a person 'agrees by choice and has the capacity to make that choice'.

In the eyes of the law, consent is the agreement between participants to engage in sexual activity. All those involved must have the freedom and full capacity to make that decision. Engaging in a sexual act without the person's consent is sexual violence, and is a criminal offence. For more information on consent and law and how to apply consent to real life, visit [www.brook.org.uk/your-life/sex-and-consent/](http://www.brook.org.uk/your-life/sex-and-consent/)



**Freely Given**



**Reversible**



**Informed**



**Enthusiastic**



**Specific**

The acronym FRIES can be seen as a useful tool to highlight the key elements of consent.

**F: Freely Given** - Consent must be given voluntarily without any pressure or coercion.

DO: Wait for a clear unprompted 'yes'

DON'T: Threaten, guilt-trip, or repeatedly ask after 'no'

**R: Reversible** - Anyone can change their mind about consent at any time, even if they have previously agreed.

DO: Check in. Respect an immediate 'stop' without argument.

DON'T: insist to continue because they said yes before or assume you can't stop once things have started

**I: Informed** - All parties must have the necessary information to make a decision about consent.

DO: Be upfront with situational information

DON'T: Lie or omit key information - eg removing a condom without the other persons knowledge (stealthing) - it is a crime

**E: Enthusiastic** - Consent should be given with eagerness and excitement, not out of obligation.

DO: Look for enthusiastic body language, paired with verbal agreement DON'T: Assume that the absence of a 'no' means 'yes'. Silence, stillness or mumbled 'I suppose' is not consent.

**S: Specific** - Consent applies to a specific act and does not imply consent for anything else.

DO: Ask before you do

DON'T: Assume that because someone consents to one activity doesn't mean they consent to a different one.

