



Birth Control Method Worksheet

From *The Vulva Owner's Manual on Birth Control*

CHOOSING YOUR BIRTH CONTROL METHOD WORKSHEET

Question	Your Answer: Yes or No	Instructions	Method Number	Birth Control Methods (BCMs)	Notes
Do you want to get pregnant?		If yes, circle number 1 If no, cross out number 1	1	No birth control	85 out of 100 sexually active women who use no birth control method become pregnant
Can you and your partner commit to sexual activity without having genital contact?		If yes, circle number 2 If no, cross out numbers 1 & 2	2	Abstinence	
Can your partner commit to pulling out before he ejaculates? Is he able to do this every time?		If yes, circle number 3 If no, cross out number 3	3	Withdrawal	18 out of every 100 sexually active women who use withdrawal become pregnant each
Can you and your partner refrain from intercourse during the fertile time of your cycle every month? Do you have a regular cycle? Can you monitor your cycle carefully every month? If you became pregnant, could you deal with it?		If yes to all questions, circle number 4 If no to any question, cross out number 4	4	Rhythm method/ natural family planning	You can use a barrier method during fertile times or if your cycle becomes irregular.
Do you want a BCM that you use only when you have intercourse?		If yes, circle numbers 5, 6, 7, & 8		Barrier methods	Barrier methods can be used in addition to other methods to protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
Do you want protection from sexually transmitted infections?		If yes, circle number 5 or 6			Use condoms as protection and as a BCM or use it along with your other BCM.



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Question	Your Answer: Yes or No	Instructions	Method Number	Birth Control Methods (BCMs)	Notes
Are you OK with using condoms?		If yes, circle numbers 5 & 6 If no, cross out numbers 5 & 6	5	Internal (female) condom	Are you or your partner allergic to latex? Most male condoms are made of latex, but you can buy condoms made of polyurethane or animal skin. Just remember, non-latex condoms do not protect against STIs. Female condoms are not made of latex.
Is your sex partner OK with using condoms?		If yes, circle number 6 If no, cross out number 6, but talk about number 5 (see Notes)	6	Male condom	
Are you allergic to spermicide?		If yes, cross out numbers 7 & 8	7	Sponge, cervical cap	Spermicide allergy is rare. Try a different brand if you are irritated by one kind.
Are you OK with putting a BCM in your vagina by yourself?		If yes, circle numbers 5, 7, 8, & 11 If no, cross out numbers 5, 7, 8, & 11	8	Diaphragm	The diaphragm must be fitted by a clinician and requires a prescription.
Are you OK with using hormonal methods?		If yes, circle numbers 9–14 If no, cross out numbers 9–14		Hormonal methods	
Can you remember to take a pill every single day?		If yes, circle numbers 9 & 12 If no, cross out numbers 9 & 12 (see Notes)	9	Combined oral contraceptives, “the pill”	Women who should not take estrogen include smokers over 35 years old, and women who have had blood clots, certain cancers, or other diseases or cardiovascular risks. Discuss this with your health care provider.
Can you remember to change your patch once a week?		If yes, circle number 10 If no, cross out number 10	10	Skin patch	
Can you remember to change your vaginal ring once a month?		If yes, circle number 11 If no, cross out number 11	11	Vaginal ring (estrogen & progesterone)	



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Are you over 35 and a smoker?		If yes, circle numbers 12 & 13 and cross out numbers 9, 10, & 11	12	Progestin-only oral contraceptives, “mini-pill”	Anyone with current breast cancer, cardiovascular disease, lupus, migraine with aura, or other medical conditions should consult a health care provider before using progestin.
Are you afraid of needles?		If yes, cross out numbers 13 & 14	13	Shot / injection (progestin-only)	Fertility may not return for several months after you stop using Depo-Provera®.
Do you want to get pregnant within the next year?		If yes, cross out number 13			
				Implantable contraception	Each of these is removable by a health care provider at any time; fertility resumes immediately upon removal.
Can you remember to have your implant rod changed every 3 to 5 years?		If yes, circle number 14	14	Implantable rod	Nexplanon® contains progestin.
Do you want a BCM that is highly effective, private, and reversible, that you only have to think about every 5 to 10 years?		If yes, circle number 15 or 16	15	Copper IUD	ParaGard® intrauterine device (IUD) contains copper, may make periods heavier.
			16	Hormonal IUD	Hormonal intrauterine device (IUD) contains progestin, may make periods go away.
Might you ever want to have a baby in the future?		If yes, cross out numbers 17 & 18 If no, circle numbers 17 & 18		Permanent methods	Surgeries to reverse these procedures are not very effective; consider them permanent.



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Question	Your Answer: Yes or No	Instructions	Method Number	Birth Control Methods (BCMs)	Notes
Are you OK with having minor surgery to prevent pregnancy permanently?		If yes, circle number 17 If no, cross out number 17	17	Tubal ligation	Tubal ligation is performed through laparoscopic, outpatient surgery.
Will your male partner consent to have minor surgery to prevent pregnancies?		If yes, circle number 18 If no, cross out number 18	18	Vasectomy	Vasectomy is performed in office or clinic.
Do you know that emergency contraceptives are available if your BCM fails, you forget to use it, or if you have intercourse against your will?		If yes, circle number 19 as a <i>back-up method</i> to your usual BCM If no, learn about number 19	19	Emergency contraception (EC): copper IUD or morning after pill(s)	There are no contraindications to EC. Some methods require a prescription from a health care professional. You can keep it in your cabinet in case you ever need it. Do not use as primary BCM.
Other questions to ask: What is important to you?					
Are you OK with visiting a health care provider to get a prescription for your birth control method?		If yes, all methods are available to you. If no, cross out numbers 8–19 and circle numbers 2–7		Requires a visit to your health care provider	Sexually active women should see a health care provider yearly for an STI exam and Pap test. (The cervical cap needs a prescription, but the sponge does not.)
Can you afford to pay >\$100 for a BCM that will last a long time?		If yes, circle numbers 14 to 18		Cost	Your insurance may cover your BCM. Some clinics have free BCMs or a sliding scale fee, so you only have to pay what you can afford. More expensive methods are actually cheaper in the long run, and all BCMs are cheaper than raising a baby.
Would you prefer to pay a small amount each time you need your BCM?		If yes, circle numbers 5 to 13			
Do you want a free BCM?		If yes, circle numbers 2 to 4 (see Notes column)			



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Do you want the most effective, reliable but temporary BCM?		If yes, circle numbers 13 to 16		Effectiveness	
Would you be OK if you had irregular bleeding or spotting between your periods?		If no, cross out numbers 9 through 14 & 16		Side Effects	These methods may or may not cause you to have spotting or irregular bleeding.
Would you be OK if you did not have periods at all while using your BCM?		If yes, circle number 9, 11, 13, or 16 If no, cross out number 9, 11, 13, or 16			You can skip your period by taking the pill or using the ring continuously. The shot and the hormonal IUD may cause your period to stop. Not having a period is not harmful to your health.
Are you at risk for uterine or ovarian cancer, ectopic pregnancy, or pelvic inflammatory disease?		If yes, circle numbers 9 through 13		Contraindications	See “Side Effects” column on BCM Chart
Is it important that your partner does not know that you are using a BCM?		If yes, circle numbers 9, 12, 13, 15, 16, & 18		Privacy	See “Discreet” column on BCM Chart

Go back and see what numbers you have NOT crossed out. Of all the methods circled, what will work best for you? Take this chart with you to your health care provider so you can discuss your decision-making process and why you have chosen the method you did. Ask any questions you still have. Remember to protect yourself from STIs.