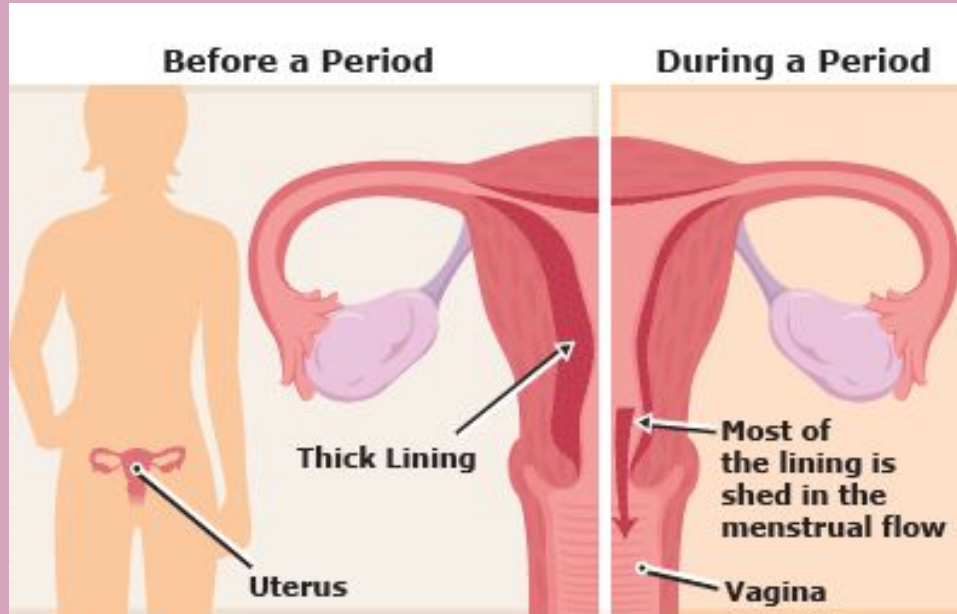




# Taking Charge of Your Fertility

A Guide to Natural Family Planning

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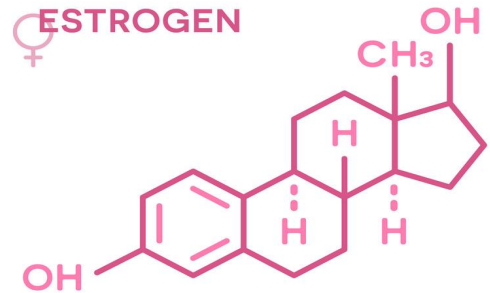
Periods are a **NATURAL** and **HEALTHY** part of a woman's life. They shouldn't get in the way of exercising, having fun, and enjoying life.

A period happens because of changes in hormones in the body. Hormones are chemical messengers. The ovaries release the female hormones estrogen and progesterone. These hormones cause the lining of the uterus to build up. The built-up lining is ready for a fertilized egg to attach to and start developing. If there is no fertilized egg, the lining breaks down and bleeds. Then the same process happens all over again.

Ovulation is the release of an egg from the ovaries. The same hormones that cause the uterus lining to build up also cause an egg to leave one of the ovaries. The egg travels through a thin tube called a fallopian tube to the uterus. If the egg is fertilized by a sperm cell, it attaches to the wall of the uterus, where over time it develops into a baby. If the egg is not fertilized, the uterus lining breaks down and bleeds, causing a period.

# Are Hormonal Contraceptives Really Safe?

Since 1962 women have been using hormonal contraceptives as a form of birth control. In the last 20 years studies have been done on the true safety, effectiveness and side effects of this method.





# Hormonal IUD

Mirena is a hormone-releasing system placed in your uterus to prevent pregnancy for up to 5 years. It is 99% effective. Common side effects of Mirena are:

- Missed periods
- Bleeding and spotting between periods
- Heavy bleeding after device insertion
- Abdominal/pelvic pain
- Ovarian cysts
- Nausea, vomiting, bloating
- Breast tenderness or pain
- Weight gain
- Hair loss
- Acne
- Depression
- Loss of interest in sex

# Copper IUD

The copper IUD works by irritating/inflaming the lining of the uterus, which in turn prevents the fertilized egg from implanting into the uterine wall. This device prevents the egg from implanting but does not prevent the sperm from fertilizing the egg and starting the conception process.

## Side effects can include:

- Pain when the IUD is placed, and cramping or back aches for a few days after
- Spotting between periods
- Irregular periods
- Heavier or longer periods
- Cramping during your periods
- Possible reaction to the copper

Effective - 99% of the time





Side effects include:

- Nausea or vomiting
- Breast tenderness
- Headaches and migraine
- Weight gain
- Hair loss
- Mood changes
- Missed periods
- Decreased interest in sex
- Breast cancer
- Cervical cancer
- Liver cancer

# Hormonal Birth Control Pill

Birth control pills work by causing your body to stop producing the two very important hormones for women, estrogen and progesterone. This makes your body stop ovulating so that you cannot get pregnant. They are 99% effective.



# Hormonal Injections

## Side effects include:



- Changes in menstrual periods
- Weight gain
- Nausea
- Stomaching cramping or pain
- Bloating
- Dizziness
- Headaches
- Drowsiness
- Irritability
- Breast tenderness
- Decrease in breast size
- Acne
- Hair Loss
- Decreased sex drive
- Hot Flashes
- Joint pain
- Injection site reactions (irritation, pain, skin changes, or a hard lump)

**Depo-Provera (medroxyprogesterone acetate) is a form of progesterone, a female hormone used as contraception to prevent pregnancy.**

# Hormonal Patch

The birth control patch works similarly to the pill. It causes the body to not ovulate by changing the hormones. It is 99% effective.



Side effects of the patch:

- heart attack symptoms--chest pain or pain spreading to your jaw or shoulder, nausea, sweating
- increased blood pressure
- signs of a stroke--sudden numbness or weakness sudden severe headache, slurred speech, problems with vision or balance
- signs of a blood clot--sudden vision loss, stabbing chest pain, feeling short of breath, coughing up blood, pain or warmth in one or both legs
- swelling or tenderness in your stomach
- jaundice (yellowing of the skin or eyes)
- unusual vaginal bleeding, pelvic pain
- a breast lump
- memory problems, confusion, unusual behavior



# Hormonal Implants

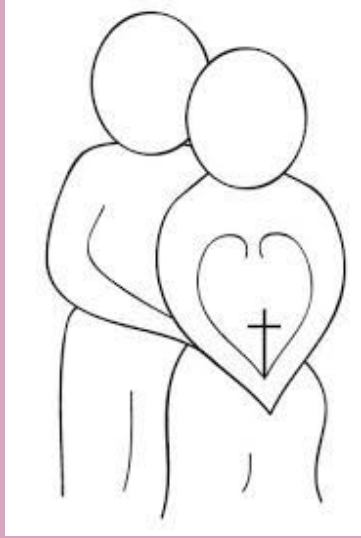
*Hormonal implants are small plastic rods that are implanted into the skin of your upper arm. The medicine dose is released slowly into the body. The rod can remain in place and provide continuous effects for 5 years. Hormonal rods interact with phenylbutazone, modafinil, St. John's wort, antibiotics, seizure medicines, barbiturates, and HIV medicines. Implanon should not be used during pregnancy or directly after pregnancy. If you become pregnant or think you may be pregnant, the rod needs to be removed immediately. A certain serious pregnancy problem (ectopic pregnancy) may be more likely if you become pregnant while using this product. Hormones from the rod pass into breast milk in small amounts.*



## Side effects include:

- Nausea
- Stomach cramping/bloating/pain
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Mood changes
- Depression
- Breast tenderness or pain
- Acne
- Hair loss
- Weight gain
- Sore throat
- Flu symptoms
- Back pain
- Menstrual cramps
- Changes in menstrual periods
- Vaginal itching, and
- Vaginal irritation or discharge

# The benefits of natural birth control options:



- No negative side effects
- No negative long-term effect on health
- Just as effective as hormonal options
- It is easy to go on and off a method, no detox required
- It is easier to conceive when you want to
- It helps you to have a deeper understanding of your body and cycle

# Male Condoms

**Proper Fit:** It is important the condom fits well otherwise it offers less protection and is less enjoyable for the man which means he is less likely to want to use them.

Condoms work by keeping semen (the fluid that contains sperm) from entering the vagina. The male **condom** is placed on the penis when it becomes erect. It is unrolled all the way to the base of the penis while holding the tip of the condom to leave some extra room at the end.

When used properly male condoms are 98% effective and the only form of pregnancy prevention that also protects against STI's.



# Breastfeeding



When a woman has just given birth, her body knows that it is not safe to get pregnant right away because her body needs time to heal. Because of this, when she is breastfeeding her child exclusively, she will not get her period back or ovulate for at least 3 months but sometimes up to a year. It works as safe and effective birth control 98% of the time when the mother is committed to breastfeeding full time. If the baby feeds on formula in addition to breastmilk, it may not work.

# Ovulation Tracking

Tracking your menstrual cycles and ovulation is a very effective way to not get pregnant. Each month there are only about 6 days that a woman can get pregnant. These days are the 2 days before you ovulate, the day you ovulate and 1 day after you ovulate. The day you ovulate is usually about 2 weeks after your period. This window of time is because sperm can live inside the vagina for up to 5 days. So with ovulation tracking, as long as you do not have unprotected sex within the window of the time you may get pregnant, it will be safe. Some people that use this method prefer to use condoms on the days they may get pregnant and others may just abstain from sex entirely, or use the pull-out method. You can track this by charting the days you have your period on a calendar or get an app that tracks your period and fertility for you. Keep track of how many days go by in between the first day of your period each month and the day you ovulate will be exactly halfway between the two.

## March 2020

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|--------|--------|---------|-----------|----------|--------|----------|
| 1      | 2      | 3       | 4         | 5        | 6      | 7        |
| 8      | 9      | 10      | 11        | 12       | 13     | 14       |
| 15     | 16     | 17      | 18        | 19       | 20     | 21       |
| 22     | 23     | 24      | 25        | 26       | 27     | 28       |
| 29     | 30     | 31      |           |          |        |          |

[www.a-printable-calendar.com](http://www.a-printable-calendar.com)

# Basal Temperature



Your basal temperature is your body's temperature when it is at rest. Checking your basal temperature every day as a form of birth control is relatively new, but about 99% effective. To use this method the woman needs to take her temperature first thing in the morning when she wakes up so it is very close to when her body was resting. When a woman ovulates, her basal temperature will increase slightly, so she knows that those are days that she cannot have unprotected sex or she may get pregnant. By tracking your basal temperature you can create a window of time that you may get pregnant and either use protection for sex on those days or abstain from sex.

# Conclusion

As a woman it is your responsibility to take charge of your fertility and be aware of all the options you have regarding contraception.

It is clear that natural family planning methods when practiced correctly are just as effective as hormonal contraceptive methods.

When it comes to hormonal contraceptives the risks outweigh the benefits.

Our bodies were delicately designed to produce and balance hormones, once we introduce synthetic hormones to our systems we cause imbalances that can negatively impact your health for years.

