

## Calendar or Rhythm

**WHAT IS IT?**  
• Charting menstrual cycle to determine fertile days.  
• Abstinence from sex during fertile days.

**EFFECTIVENESS:**  
75% – 91%

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**  
The egg and sperm do not meet – Fertilization will not happen.

**HOW IS IT USED?**  
Woman charts menstrual cycle on a calendar. Fertile days are charted based on ovulatory cycle, knowing that:  
• Usually ovulation happens between days 12 and 16 before period.  
• Sperm lives for about five days.  
• Egg lives for 24 hours.

**BENEFITS:**  
• No health risks or side effects.  
• Can be used to determine fertile days if pregnancy is wanted.  
• Responsibility is shared by couple.

**POSSIBLE CONCERNs:**  
• Might be hard to predict fertile days. Menstrual cycles can change due to stress or illness.  
• Abstinence can be hard to stick to.  
• Record-keeping is essential.

**Does not reduce risk of HIV/AIDS or STDs.**



## Female Condom

**WHAT IS IT?**  
A sheath made of polyurethane with rubber rings at each end that covers the vagina.

**EFFECTIVENESS:**  
79% – 95%

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**  
• Creates a barrier between penis and vagina.  
• Collects and holds the semen.

**HOW IS IT USED?**  
• Must be inserted before contact between penis and vagina.  
• Insert ring at closed end deep inside vagina. Opened ring stays outside the vagina. The condom is removed after sex and thrown away without spilling the semen.  
• Condom is used only once.

**BENEFITS:**  
• Women can assure protection.  
• Can be bought at most drugstores.  
• Can be placed in vagina up to 8 hours before use.  
• The material is stronger than latex.  
• Can be used for people with latex allergies.

**POSSIBLE CONCERNs:**  
• May slip out of place during sex.  
• May be difficult for some women to insert at first.  
• May cause irritation or discomfort.  
• May increase risk for toxic shock syndrome if left in too long.

**May reduce risk of HIV/AIDS and STDs.**

## Diaphragm WITH SPERMICIDE

**WHAT IS IT?**  
Dome-shaped latex cup with flexible rim to cover the cervix.

**EFFECTIVENESS:**  
80% – 94%

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**  
• Cup acts as barrier to sperm.  
• Spermicide kills sperm.

**HOW IS IT USED?**  
• Clinician fits woman with proper size and teaches correct use.  
Spermicide is placed inside the cup before inserting no more than two hours before sex.  
• Diaphragm should be left in place for at least six hours after sex. (Additional spermicide is needed for each other act of intercourse).

**BENEFITS:**  
Can be placed in the vagina up to two hours before sex.

**POSSIBLE CONCERNs:**  
• Requires a clinic visit for sizing and prescription for diaphragm.  
• Some people are allergic to latex or spermicide.  
• Must be removed within 24 hours to avoid pelvic pressure, vaginal discharge, irritation, or toxic shock.  
• May increase risk for vaginal and urinary tract infections.  
• Cannot be used with oil-based lubricants or vaginal medications.

**Not proven to reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS or STDs.**

## The Pill

**WHAT IS IT?**  
Pills containing the hormones estrogen and progestin.

**EFFECTIVENESS:**  
95% – 99.9%

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**  
• Thickens cervical mucus.  
• Prevents ovulation (release of egg).  
• Prevents implantation of fertilized egg.

**HOW IS IT USED?**  
One pill is taken at the same time each day.

**BENEFITS:**  
• Reversible.  
• Does not interfere with sex.  
• Medically safe for most women.  
• Regulates periods, lighter periods.  
• Decreases menstrual pain and PMS.  
• May improve acne.  
• Reduces risk for ovarian and endometrial cancers.

**POSSIBLE CONCERNs:**

• Nausea, weight gain, headaches, dizziness, and breast tenderness.  
• Break-through bleeding or spotting between periods.  
• Mood swings.  
• May increase risk of stroke, heart attack, blood clots, and high blood pressure (especially for women over 35 who smoke).  
• New pill clients must also use additional form of birth control for first month.

**Does not reduce risk for HIV/AIDS or STDs.**

## Ortho Evra

**WHAT IS IT?**  
A birth-control patch that contains both estrogen and progestin.

**EFFECTIVENESS:**  
98% – 99%

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**  
• Thickens cervical mucus.  
• Prevents ovulation (release of egg).  
• Prevents implantation of fertilized egg.

**HOW IS IT USED?**  
• New patch applied each week for three weeks.  
• Removed during the fourth week.  
• Can go on buttocks, abdomen, or upper arm.

**BENEFITS:**  
• Equals Pill effectiveness.  
• Weekly use, rather than daily.  
• Good cycle control.  
• May improve acne.  
• Does not interfere with sex.

**POSSIBLE CONCERNs:**

• Breast tenderness first three months.  
• Irritation to skin. (Rotating the placement helps.)  
• Some bleeding and nausea first 3 months.  
• May increase risk of stroke, heart attack, blood clots, and high blood pressure (especially for women over 35 who smoke).

**Does not reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS or or STDs.**

## IUD

**WHAT IS IT?**  
A medicated plastic device that is placed into the uterus. It has a string attached that hangs down into the vagina.

**EFFECTIVENESS:**  
99% – 99.2%

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**  
In most cases, prevents fertilization of egg. If egg is fertilized, prevents egg from attaching to the uterus.

**HOW IS IT USED?**  
A clinician inserts IUD into the uterus. Patient should check correct placement by feeling for the string.

**EFFECTIVENESS:**  
There are two kinds:  
• Hormonal and Non-Hormonal

**BENEFITS:**  
• Reversible.  
• Does not interfere with sex.  
• Nothing to remember (except checking the string).  
• Long-acting (either five years, or up to 10 years).

**POSSIBLE CONCERNs:**

• May not stay in place.  
• Some women may have heavy bleeding and cramps.  
• Should not be used by women with HIV infection or impaired immune system conditions.  
• May increase the risk of pelvic inflammatory disease in women with multiple partners.

**Does not reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS or STDs.**

**You can get emergency contraception at your nearest State Service Center Family Planning Clinic.**

**When you call, tell them you need EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVE PILLS.**

### NEW CASTLE COUNTY:

Hudson State Service Center: 302-283-7587  
Porter State Service Center: 302-777-2860

### KENT COUNTY:

Milford Riverwalk: 302-424-7140  
Williams State Service Center: 302-857-5150

### SUSSEX COUNTY:

Adams State Service Center: 302-515-3232  
Pyle State Service Center: 302-732-1742  
Shipley State Service Center: 302-628-6772



# FAMILY PLANNING HANDBOOK

## CONTRACEPTIVE OPTIONS



Also ask about STI testing and Family Planning Services.

**DELAWARE FAMILY PLANNING**

For a complete listing of Family Planning and Reproductive Health services, please visit our website at: [reproductivehealth.dhss.delaware.gov](http://reproductivehealth.dhss.delaware.gov)

DELAWARE HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES Division of Public Health | 417 Federal Street Dover, DE 19903 | Toll Free Delaware Help Line: (800) 464-4357

**DELAWARE FAMILY PLANNING**

[reproductivehealth.dhss.delaware.gov](http://reproductivehealth.dhss.delaware.gov)

## Abstinence

**WHAT IS IT?**  
Decision not to have sexual intercourse.

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**  
Egg and sperm do not meet (prevents fertilization).

**HOW IS IT USED?**  
A person or couple decides not to have sexual intercourse.

**BENEFITS:**

- Eliminates the risk for HIV/AIDS and STDs.
- Has no health risks or side effects.
- Can be used at any time, regardless of prior sexual experience.
- Allows users to focus on nonsexual aspects of their relationship.

**POSSIBLE CONCERNs:**

- May be hard to maintain.
- Requires determination.

**Reduces risk of HIV/AIDS and STDs by 100%.**

## Nexplanon

**WHAT IS IT?**  
Nexplanon is a long-acting form of birth control for women. It is a single plastic rod the size of a matchstick that is inserted under the skin of the arm. Nexplanon contains a hormone called etonogestrel (progestin).

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**

- Stops the release of egg from ovary.
- Changes mucus in cervix, which might keep sperm from reaching egg.
- Changes lining of uterus.

**HOW IS IT USED?**  
A health care provider inserts Nexplanon, a single plastic rod containing the hormone etonogestrel (progestin), under the skin of the arm. You can use a single Nexplanon for up to three years.

**BENEFITS:**

- Works for three years.
- Does not interfere with sex.
- If breastfeeding, might be possible to use four weeks after delivery. Talk with health care provider.
- Ability to get pregnant might return quickly after Nexplanon removal.

**POSSIBLE CONCERNs:**

- Expect menstrual periods to be irregular and unpredictable throughout the time using Nexplanon (including more bleeding, less bleeding or no bleeding, varying time between periods and spotting between periods).
- Side effects may include irregular bleeding, headache, vaginitis (inflammation of the vagina), weight gain, acne, breast pain, mood swings, nervousness, or depression.
- Need to return for removal and replacement after three years.
- Both insertion and removal require a minor surgical procedure.
- Unknown if less effective in very overweight women, as studies did not include many overweight women.

**Does not reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS or STDs.**

**EFFECTIVENESS:**  
100%

## Male Sterilization (Vasectomy)

**WHAT IS IT?**  
Surgical procedure to cut and block male sperm tube.

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**  
Removes sperm from the semen.

**HOW IS IT USED?**

- Local anesthesia is used.
- A surgical procedure is done to cut or block the tubes.
- This method is permanent.

**BENEFITS:**

- Permanent.
- Safe.
- Easier than female sterilization.
- Does not interfere with sex.

**POSSIBLE CONCERNs:**

- Vasectomy is not effective until sperm is cleared from the male system—usually about 15 ejaculations, or six weeks.
- Surgery may cause adverse reaction to anesthetic, or infection and bleeding.
- Temporary bruising, swelling, or tenderness of the scrotum.

**Does not reduce risk of HIV/AIDS or STDs.**

**EFFECTIVENESS:**  
99.8% – 99.9%

## NuvaRing®

**WHAT IS IT?**  
A flexible, donut-shaped ring containing estrogen, which is inserted into the vagina.

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**

- Thickens cervical mucus.
- Prevents ovulation (release of egg).
- Prevents implantation of fertilized egg.

**HOW IS IT USED?**

- Inserted for three weeks.
- Removed during the fourth week.
- New ring inserted after fourth week.

**BENEFITS:**

- Equals Pill effectiveness.
- One ring lasts for three weeks.
- Good cycle control.

**POSSIBLE CONCERNs:**

- Not recommended for heavy smokers. May increase risk of stroke, heart attack, blood clots, and high blood pressure (especially for women over 35 who smoke).
- Vaginal discharge, infection, or irritation.
- Headache, weight gain, bleeding, or nausea.
- Breast tenderness first three months.

**Does not reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS or STDs.**

**EFFECTIVENESS:**  
98% – 99%

## Vaginal Spermicides

**WHAT IS IT?**  
Creams, gels/jellies, foams, films, or suppositories containing sperm-killing chemicals.

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**

- Kills sperm.
- Some kinds block sperm from entering the cervix.
- Prevents fertilization.

**HOW IS IT USED?**

- Placed inside the vagina by hand or with an applicator before sex.
- May be placed on condom, or inside diaphragm or cervical cap.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**

- Only effective for about one hour when used alone.
- Additional application is needed for each act of intercourse.
- Follow instructions; some are not effective until 10–15 minutes after inserting.

**BENEFITS:**  
No prescription needed. Available at most drugstores.

**POSSIBLE CONCERNs:**

- May cause irritation or discomfort.
- Frequent spermicide use (>2 times/day) may cause irritation that may increase susceptibility to HIV.
- May increase risk for vaginal and urinary tract infections.
- Some people may be allergic to spermicides.
- Proper use may interrupt sexual mood.
- May leak or feel messy.

**Not proven to reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS or STDs.**

**EFFECTIVENESS:**  
74% – 94%  
Using a condom with spermicide increases effectiveness up to 99.9%.



## YOU HAD UNPLANNED OR UNPROTECTED SEX.

**There is something you can do.  
But you only have a few days to act.**



**If you had sex within the past few days and:**

- You didn't use any birth control, or
- The condom broke, or
- You started your pill pack late, or
- Your diaphragm slipped, or
- You missed your birth control shot, or
- You were forced to have sex.

**Not proven to reduce the risk of HIV/AIDS or STDs.**

## Natural Family Planning

**WHAT IS IT?**  
A variety of methods to help detect when to avoid sex during the fertile days of a woman's cycle.

**HOW DOES IT WORK?**  
Users abstain from sex on fertile days to prevent egg and sperm from meeting.

**HOW IS IT USED?**  
Meet with a qualified family-planning clinician for specific details on the following:

- Observing and charting daily signs of fertility or ovulation (release of egg).
- Basal Body Temperature Method: Temperature taken and charted each day.
- Cervical Mucus Method: Mucus is checked for signs of ovulation.
- Sympto-Thermal Method: Combines both methods above with checking position of cervix.

**BENEFITS:**

- No health risks or side-effects.
- Can be used to determine fertile days if pregnancy is wanted.
- Responsibility is shared by couple.

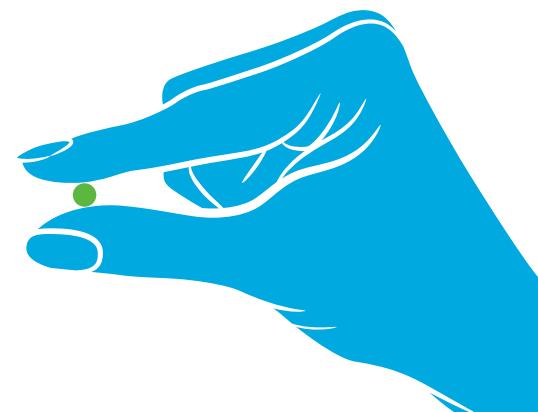
**POSSIBLE CONCERNs:**

- Condoms may slip off, break, or cause irritation or discomfort.
- Proper use may interfere with spontaneity.
- May affect sexual sensations.
- If allergic to latex, plastic condoms should be used.
- Latex condoms should not be used with oil-based lubricants.

**Reduces risk of HIV/AIDS and STDs, when using latex or plastic.**

## There is something you can do!

**Take Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECPs) within a few days of unprotected or unplanned sex, to reduce your chances of becoming pregnant.**



### PLEASE REMEMBER:

- You have only a few days to act.
- ECPs are not abortion pills.
- They will not work if you're pregnant.
- Regular birth control is essential.
- Abstinence is the only safe way to prevent pregnancy and disease.

### WHAT ARE ECPs?

Ordinary birth-control pills taken in special doses. Taken within a few days of unprotected or unplanned sex, ECPs can reduce your chance of pregnancy by 75%. ECPs can prevent or delay eggs from being produced.

### IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW:

- ECPs will NOT cause an abortion.
- ECPs will NOT work if you are already pregnant.
- ECPs are for emergency use only!

If you are having sex, it is important to use a regular and effective method of birth control. Condoms should also be used to protect you from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV/AIDS. Abstinence is always the safest way to avoid pregnancy. But if you ARE having sex, it's crucial that you protect yourself from both pregnancy and disease.

**ECPs MAY PRODUCE SOME SIDE EFFECTS:**  
Some women might feel sick to their stomach and possibly throw up. Some women may have sore breasts or headaches. These side effects usually start a day or two. ECPs could also cause your next period to come a little early or a little late.