

## **Birth Control Cheat Sheet**

### **Abstinence**

- Avoiding any contact with bodily fluids by avoiding all sexual contact (oral, anal or vaginal intercourse, as well as, touching one another's genitals).
- Only method that is 100% effective in preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STI's) when used correctly.
- May be started at any time of life, even if previously sexually active.
- Requires communication with romantic partners about physical expectations and boundaries.
- Must be a continually practiced behavior.
- No cost.

### **Birth Control pills**

- Pills contain female hormones (Estrogen & Progestin).
- When used correctly, prevents eggs from leaving ovary and keeps uterine lining from thickening.
- Often makes periods more regular and lighter with less menstrual cramping.
- One pill must be taken every day at the same time to be properly effective.
- Increased risk of blood clot or stroke in smokers.
- Prescription required.
- Costs about \$15–\$50 each month.

### **Birth Control Patch**

- Thin piece of plastic containing hormones that are gradually released through the skin into the woman's bloodstream.
- When used correctly, this patch prevents eggs from leaving the ovary and keeps uterine lining from thickening.
- Often makes periods more regular and lighter with less menstrual cramping.
- Must be worn for one week straight on the upper arm, shoulder, back, stomach or buttocks.
- Change patch weekly for three weeks in a row and on the fourth week remove the patch and do not reapply for one week to get monthly period. Protection against pregnancy is still provided during the fourth week without the patch.
- Some women may have skin allergy to glue on the patch.
- Increased risk of blood clot or stroke in smokers.
- Prescription required.
- Costs about \$15–\$50 a month.

## **Depo Provera Birth Control Shot**

- A shot in the arm or buttocks of progestin hormones to prevent pregnancy.
- Prescription/office visit required.
- Lasts for about three months (12 weeks).
- Contains progestin to suppress ovulation and prevent uterine lining from thickening so fertilized egg cannot implant. Also affects cervical mucus so sperm has difficulty swimming through to reach an egg.
- Some women do not menstruate or have irregular cycles.
- May be used by women who smoke with fewer risks than other hormonal methods.
- Costs \$35–\$75 per injection, plus any exam fees.

## **Nuva Ring Vaginal Ring**

- A small clear rubber ring worn inside the vagina three weeks every month to prevent pregnancy.
- Slowly releases female hormones through skin to prevent ovulation (egg from being released by ovary).
- Wear one ring inside vagina for three weeks and take out the fourth week (period comes during the fourth week, and still protected against pregnancy if ring was worn correctly during first three weeks).
- Often makes periods more regular and lighter with less menstrual cramping.
- Requires woman to insert and remove with fingers. Must be comfortable touching own genitals.
- Increased risk of blood clot or stroke in smokers.
- Prescription required.
- Costs about \$15–\$50 a month.

## **Condoms**

- Latex or plastic sheaths for the penis.
- Creates a barrier that keeps the sperm from entering a partner's body and meeting the egg.
- Prevents pregnancy and most sexually transmitted infections (does not protect entirely against skin-to-skin infections that could be on skin around genitals, thighs, scrotum, labia etc. ex. herpes, HPV, pubic lice).
- Can be used for vaginal, anal, or oral sex.
- Available at most stores.
- Comes in a wide variety of sizes, styles, brands.
- Cost about \$1 each, but are sometimes available for free.

## **Emergency Contraceptive Pills (EC, Plan B)**

- Larger dose of the same hormones in a birth control pill.
- Must be taken up to five days after unprotected sex. The sooner the better.
- Keeps egg in ovary so sperm cannot reach it AND/OR keeps uterine lining from thickening so fertilized egg cannot implant OR sheds uterine lining immediately so fertilized egg cannot implant.
- How it works depends on where a woman is in her menstrual cycle when she takes EC pill.
- May cause period to start immediately or come later than normal (depends on a woman's cycle).
- EC is not abortion – if a woman is already pregnant, it will not do anything to that developing pregnancy.
- Prescription required if under age 18, over age 18 can buy over the counter (OTC) at a pharmacy.
- Cost up to \$45 at pharmacy.

## **Implanon Implant**

- A matchstick-sized rod that is inserted into the arm to prevent pregnancy for up to three years at a time.
- Contains progestin hormones to suppress ovulation and prevent uterine lining from thickening so fertilized egg cannot implant and also affects cervical mucus so sperm has difficulty swimming through to reach an egg.
- Some women do not menstruate or have irregular cycles.
- Must be inserted and removed by a health care provider.
- Costs between \$400 and \$800 up front, but lasts up to three years.

## **The IUD (Intrauterine Device)**

- Small, "T-shaped" device inserted into the uterus to prevent pregnancy for 5 to 12 years.
- Prevents pregnancy by interfering with sperm mobility, thickening cervical mucus, and not allowing for usual thickening of uterine lining so fertilized egg cannot implant.
- May contain a small amount of hormones to help with bleeding after initial insertion.
- May be considered either barrier or hormonal, depending on the brand used.
- Must be inserted and removed by a health care provider.
- Costs between \$175 and \$500 up front, but lasts 5 to 12 years.