

# A360 Contraception Key Messages & Method Descriptions

## Contraception Key Messages

- **Contraception protects your fertility.** When you use contraception, you get to decide if and when to become pregnant, which leads to healthier pregnancies. Often when pregnancies are unintended, they can hurt the health of the mother and child, and also mom's chances of healthy future pregnancies.
- **Contraception can be used by all girls and women.** This includes women that are not married, women that have never had sex (but might soon), and women that have never had children.
- **All of the modern methods of contraception that we provide are temporary and completely reversible.** Once you stop using any of these methods, your chances of getting pregnant are the same as they were before you started using contraception. When you stop some methods, you can either get pregnant right away. With other methods it can take a few extra months to get pregnant after you stop.
- **Contraception is totally safe.** Contraceptives may have some mild side effects, which are totally normal, including some bleeding changes during your period and other mild changes in your body. These side effects often go away in a few months, but if they are more than mild or bother you a lot, you can easily switch to another method with the help of a provider.
- **Use of Contraception is smart and responsible.** Using a modern contraceptive does not mean you are promiscuous; it shows you are taking responsibility for your life, body and health.
- **There are many options available,** so you can choose the one that fits you best. **The best way to find the right method for you is to talk to a health provider.** A provider can answer questions you have about the different methods, and give you information on the methods, then help you choose the one that is best for you. Most of the time, you can get a method on the same day you talk to a provider.

## Contraceptive Method Descriptions

### Intra uterine device (IUD)

How does it work? The IUD is placed in the uterus, through the vagina, by a health provider. Once in place, you don't have to do anything else for it to work.

How private is it? Your partner might be able to feel the strings in your vagina, but they are soft and will not hurt him.

How well does it work? The IUD is one of the most effective methods for preventing pregnancy. The IUD can also be used as emergency contraception within 120 hours after sex, and is more effective than emergency contraceptive pills.

How long does it last? The IUD will continue to work for up to 10 years, but you can have it removed by a provider anytime for any reason.

When does fertility return? Once removed, you can immediately become pregnant.

What are the side effects? There might be some changes to your period after putting it in including spotting, irregular periods, or heavier periods. You might also have some cramping right after it is inserted, but this should go away in a few days.

What about STIs and HIV? The IUD does not protect you from STIs and HIV.

### Implant

How does it work? The implant is a tiny, thin rod that a health provider places under the skin in your arm. Once it is placed, you do not have to do anything else for it to work.

How private is it? You can't see it, but you or someone else might be able to feel it when you touch your arm.

How well does it work? The implant is one of the most effective methods for preventing pregnancy.

How long does it last? The implant works for up to 5 years, but you can have the implant removed at any time for any reason by a provider.

When does fertility return? Once it is removed by a provider, it's possible to get pregnant immediately.

What are the side effects? Your period while using implants will usually be lighter but less predictable. For some users, their period will pause while using the implant and return once

it is removed. There might be other side effects like headaches, breast pain, or weight gain, but these are not as common. Side effects often get better within a few months as your body gets used to the implant.

What about STIs and HIV? The implant will not protect you from STIs or HIV.

### **Injectable:**

How does it work? It is a shot given in your arm every three months by a health provider.

How private is it? The injectable is completely invisible and nobody can tell that you're using it.

How well does it work? The injectable is very effective at preventing pregnancy as long as you remember to get it every three months.

How long does it last? Each injection lasts for three months. If you want it to continue working, you have to get the injection every three months and you can do so for as long as you want.

When does fertility return? You will be able to get pregnant after stopping this method, but the delay in getting pregnant can be longer than with other methods, a few extra months.

What are the side effects? Your periods may pause or become lighter and unpredictable while you are using injections and it may take a few months for your body to restart your menstrual cycle after stopping injections. You might have some nausea, weight gain, headaches, or breast tenderness, but side effects usually go away 2-3 months after starting this method.

What about STIs and HIV? The injection will not protect you from STIs or HIV

### **Oral Contraceptive Pills:**

How does it work? The oral contraceptive pill is a pill that you take every day at the same time to prevent pregnancy.

How private is it? People may know that you are taking it if they see the pill package.

How well does it work? The pill is effective, but you need to remember to take it every single day at the same time each day, otherwise it does not work as well to prevent pregnancy.

How long does it last? Each pill lasts for one day, so the pills need to be taken each day at the same time.

When does fertility return? Once you decide to stop using it, it's possible to get pregnant right away.

What are the side effects? The pills may cause some irregular bleeding for a few months, but then for most girls, periods become lighter and more predictable. Many people have no other side effects, Some other side effects can be sore breasts, nausea, and headaches, but these usually go away within 2-3 months of starting the pill.

What about STIs and HIV? The pill will not protect you from STIs or HIV

### **Condoms:**

How does it work? Male condoms are put over the man's erect penis and female condoms go inside a woman's vagina. Only one condom should be used at a time and each condom cannot be used more than once. You can use a condom at the same time as any other contraceptive method for extra protection.

How private is it? Condoms are not private. They can be seen by you and your partners.

How well does it work? Condoms are effective, but they need to be used correctly and consistently every time you have sex in order to work most effectively. They are not as effective at preventing pregnancy as other methods (IUD, implant, injection, pill).

How long does it last? Each condom can be used for sex once. Each time you have sex, you need to use a new condom.

When does fertility return? If you are not using another method, you can get pregnant anytime you have sex without using a condom.

What are the side effects? There are no side effects.

What about STIs and HIV? Male and female are the only contraceptive methods that prevent many STIs, including HIV.

### **Emergency Contraceptive Pills:**

How does it work? Emergency contraception (EC) is a pill that you can take after sex if you didn't use any protection. You take the complete pill dose as soon as possible (within 120 hours) after having unprotected sex. This is a good method to use in case you forget to take your regular method on time (e.g. pills, injectable), a condom breaks, or you have unprotected sex unexpectedly or against your will.

How private is it? No one will know you took it unless they find the package.

How well does it work? The sooner you take emergency contraception the more effective it is, and it is effective only if you are not already pregnant. The other methods are more

effective at preventing pregnancy and emergency contraception should not be relied on as a main method. The copper IUD is the most effective form of emergency contraception.

How long does it last? EC pills may only prevent pregnancy at the time you take them. You should take them as soon as possible after sex, at most 120 hours (5 days) after sex.

When does fertility return? If using the EC pill, you can get pregnant again the next time you have sex if you are not using another method.

What are EC pill side effects? It's totally normal for your next period to be different after taking emergency contraception; it might be early or late, heavier or lighter. Some people have an upset stomach, feel dizzy, or have tender breasts just after taking it, but that should go away quickly. Emergency contraception will not prevent pregnancy once you are already pregnant, meaning that it will not cause an abortion. It only works if you are not pregnant.

What about STIs and HIV? Emergency contraception will not protect you from STIs or HIV.