

CONTRACEPTION

Contraceptive pills

The contraceptive pill works by supplying the body with a small dose of hormones every day. The pill, as it is commonly called, is the most common method of contraception, available in many different brands and varieties with different hormone content. If there are any side-effects one can try another brand. The pill is taken daily over a 3-week period followed by a 7-day interval during menstruation.

You need a prescription from a doctor or clinic to buy contraceptive pills at a pharmacy.

The Mini-Pill

Mini-Pills work by giving the body a limited daily supply of hormones. The name does not mean that the pills are smaller than the contraceptive pill but that they only contain one kind of hormone (gestagen or progestin).

You need a prescription from a doctor or clinic to buy Mini-Pills at a pharmacy.

Contraceptive patch

The patch contains hormones, which are released from the patch to the body. The patch is applied to the skin of the stomach, buttocks, upper outer arm, shoulder, or upper torso once a week for 3 weeks in a row, before stopping for one week during menstruation. The patch is applied to the buttocks, the stomach, the upper torso (but not the breasts) or the upper outer arm. If the patch falls off, the body will have sufficient hormone protection to last for two days.

You need a prescription from a doctor or clinic to buy contraceptive patches at a pharmacy.

Contraceptive implants

A contraceptive implant is a small match-stick sized plastic rod. The rod releases a small quantity of hormones daily. The rod protects against pregnancy for a period of three years. It is implanted surgically beneath the skin on the upper arm using a local anaesthetic. The rod stays where it has been implanted.

You need to contact a doctor or a birth control clinic to have a contraceptive rod implanted.

Contraceptive ring

The contraceptive ring is a flexible plastic ring that secretes a small dose of hormone daily.

The woman has to insert the ring in the upper part of her vagina with no specific way of doing so required. She cannot feel the ring while it is there. It is inserted during the beginning of a menstruation period and remains there for three weeks. It is then taken out and discarded, having a one-week break during menstruation. A new ring is then inserted. If the ring falls out there is sufficient protection for three

hours. Users may take out the ring during sexual intercourses but that is hardly required since the male partner will not feel it.

With a prescription from a doctor or a birth control clinic the contraceptive ring is available at pharmacies.

Hormone coil (or IUD, intra-uterine contraceptive device)

This is a small T-shaped device made of plastic, which is inserted in the uterus either at the doctor's or at a birth control clinic. It has a small container that releases a daily dose of hormone. The coil prevents fertilized eggs from attaching to the uterus and sperm from entering it.

The copper T (another IUD)

This is another small T-shaped device, which is inserted in the uterus either at the doctor's or at a birth control clinic. It prevents fertilized eggs from attaching to the uterus. The device contains no hormone but a thin copper thread is wound round it, which also helps prevent sperm cells in fertilizing eggs.

The male condom

The male condom is the only contraceptive available to men. It consists of an oblong sheath of thin latex that is rolled on to the erect penis. The condom prevents the sperm cells from entering the uterus, where they could fertilize an egg.

It is very important that the condom is rolled on before sexual intercourse since some sperm cells may enter the female partner even before ejaculation (he 'comes'). Once the male partner has ejaculated the condom is carefully taken off, making sure not to spill any fluid.

Additional information from:

www.abortnet.dk

Information about abortion and contraception.

www.sexogsamfund.dk

Information material about contraception, family planning etc. in different languages.

www.sundkom.dk

Fliers in different languages about family planning.

www.sst.dk

Information material in different languages.

www.gynaekologer.dk

A list of gynaecologists in Denmark.

www.sexlinien.dk

Information about contraception, sexually-transmitted infections and sex. On-line questions and answers.

www.aids-linien.dk

Information about HIV, AIDS and sexually-transmitted diseases (STIs).
On-line questions and answers and a chat forum.

Source: *Kvinder og sundhed - viden om prævention og forplantning*,
Sundhedsstyrelsen (Danish National Board of Health) 2006.