

Long-acting reversible contraception

If your plan for the future doesn't include kids for a few years or more, you may want to consider long-acting reversible contraception (LARC). LARC prevents pregnancy more than 99% of the time, for up to 10 years depending on the method. Your doctor inserts the LARC and can remove it at any time if you change your mind. Between insertion and removal, you do not have to do anything extra to avoid getting pregnant. LARC can't protect you from sexually transmitted infections; only condoms, used correctly every time, can do that.

Types of LARC

- **An intrauterine device (IUD)** is a T-shaped device that your doctor places into your uterus. This is done in a doctor's office and does not require an additional office visit. The process takes less than five minutes. There are two types of IUDs.
 1. **The copper IUD** does not release hormones into your body. Copper kills sperm before they can fertilize your egg. The copper IUD is effective immediately and works for up to 10 years. It fails only about 0.8% of the time. The copper IUD can be used as emergency contraception. A doctor can insert a copper IUD up to five days after unprotected sex (or birth control failure) to prevent conception.
 2. **The levonorgestrel IUD (LNG IUD)** is an IUD that releases progestin to keep your body from releasing eggs (ovulation). The LNG IUD works for up to 5 years and fails only about 0.2% of the time. An LNG IUD can be effective immediately when it's put in during the first seven days of your period. If it's put in at a different time, or you aren't sure where in your cycle you're at, you should use a backup method for seven days after insertion.
- **The implant** is a small, flexible plastic rod. To get it, a doctor numbs your upper arm and inserts the implant right under your skin. It lasts for several years, and when it's time to come out, the doctor will remove it. It releases progestin to prevent ovulation, and it fails only about 0.5% of the time. If you get the implant within the first five days of your period, it's effective right away. If not, you should use a backup method of birth control for seven days.

Questions to ask yourself

1. Do I have a plan to keep me from contracting STIs?
2. Would I rather take something hormonal or nonhormonal?

Questions to ask your doctor

1. Is there any reason I shouldn't use an IUD or an implant?
2. What side effects are normal? What symptoms should I call you about?
3. How soon will fertility return when my implant or IUD is removed?

For more helpful information on family planning:

- [Office on Women's Health](#)
- [Medline Plus](#)
- [National Institutes of Health](#)
- [Office of Adolescent Health](#)

For members who don't speak English, or are deaf or hard of hearing, we offer free oral interpretation services for all languages as well as auxiliary aids to assist you. To get these services, call Amerigroup Washington Member Services at 1-800-600-4441 (TTY 711) Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Pacific time.

To speak to a nurse or doctor 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, call the 24-hour Nurse Helpline at 1-866-864-2544 (TTY 711) for English or 1-866-864-2545 (TTY 711) for Spanish.

Sources:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Contraception

<https://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/contraception/index.htm>, accessed August 14, 2018

World Health Organization

Family Planning

<http://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/fp-global-handbook/en/>, accessed August 14, 2018

National Institutes of Health

What are the different types of contraception?

<https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/contraception/conditioninfo/types>, accessed August 14, 2018

Planned Parenthood

What's an IUD insertion like?

<https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/birth-control/iud/whats-an-iud-insertion-like>, accessed September 18, 2018

Bedsider

Implant

<https://www.bedsider.org/methods/implant>, accessed September 18, 2018