The Women's Natural Health Clinic
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Contraception Choices

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Key facts

- No contraceptive method is perfect, and the best choice may change at different times in your life.
- Implants and coils are the most effective methods, at over 99% in everyday use.
- Hormone-free options include the copper coil, diaphragm or cap, condoms and natural family planning.
- Only condoms protect against sexually transmitted infections.
- We offer diaphragm and cap fitting and natural family planning teaching at our Twickenham clinic.

Choosing the right contraception

Many methods of contraception are available, each with advantages and drawbacks. The best method is one that you and your partner feel comfortable with and will use correctly and consistently. Your risk of sexually transmitted infections also matters, and for many women a combination of methods works best.

Comparing contraception choices

No method is perfect, and the right choice may change at different times in your life. Typical-use figures reflect how well a method works in everyday life.

Method	Typical-use effectiveness	Hormones	Notes
Implant	over 99%	Progestogen	Lasts 3 years; periods may become irregular
Hormonal coil (IUS)	over 99%	Progestogen	Mirena lasts up to 8 years for contraception; periods usually lighter
Copper coil (IUD)	over 99%	None	Lasts 5 to 10 years; periods may be heavier; also emergency contraception
Injection	about 96%	Progestogen	Every 13 weeks; fertility can take up to a year to return
Combined pill, patch or ring	about 91%	Oestrogen and progestogen	Can reduce period pain and bleeding
Progestogen-only pill	about 91%	Progestogen	Suitable when breastfeeding
Natural family planning	about 98% (Sensiplan)	None	Needs teaching and daily observation
Male condom	about 82%	None	Protects against infections
Diaphragm or cap	about 83 to 88%	None	Fitted by a professional; used with a gel

Diaphragms and caps

A diaphragm or cervical cap is a soft silicone barrier placed in the vagina over the cervix before sex. It is used with a contraceptive gel and left in place for at least six hours afterwards. Many couples using NFP choose a diaphragm or cap for the fertile days. It must be fitted for size, and refitted after pregnancy or a significant change in weight.

Emergency contraception

If you have unprotected sex or a method fails, emergency pills can be taken up to three or five days afterwards depending on the type, and work best as soon as possible. A copper coil fitted within five days is the most effective emergency method and can stay in as ongoing contraception.

When to see a healthcare professional

Seek advice if you have pain during sex, unusual bleeding, spotting, discharge or odour, or burning or itching that may be an allergy to a gel or spermicide. With a diaphragm or cap, get it checked if it does not seem to fit properly, causes discomfort or recurring bladder infections, after a weight change of more than about 3kg (7lbs), and after having a baby.

How can we help?

- **Diaphragm and cap fitting** and follow-up.
- **Natural family planning teaching** with our certified Sensiplan instructor. See our Natural Family Planning page.
- **Advice on choosing a method** that suits your health and plans.

Frequently asked questions

What is the most effective contraception?

The implant and the hormonal and copper coils are over 99% effective in everyday use, because they do not rely on remembering to take or use something.

What contraception has no hormones?

The copper coil, diaphragm or cap, male and female condoms and natural family planning are all hormone-free.

How long does Mirena last?

Mirena is licensed for up to 8 years for contraception, or 5 years when used as part of HRT.

Can I get a diaphragm or cap fitted at your clinic?

Yes. We fit diaphragms and caps and teach you how to use them, with follow-up to check the fit.

Book a consultation

To book, visit womensnaturalhealthclinic.com/book or call 020 3811 8778. Initial consultations last up to one hour at our clinic at 16 Bridle Lane, St Margaret’s, Twickenham TW1 3EE.

Sources

- NHS: Which method of contraception suits me? (nhs.uk/contraception/choosing-contraception)
- FSRH: Mirena extension of licence to 8 years (2024) (fsrh.org)