

PREVENTING PREGNANCY & SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES/INFECTIONS

Making choices about your body includes deciding whether or not you want to have sex. If you choose to have sex you should make sure that you are being safe. While many people focus on not getting pregnant, you should also consider the danger of catching sexually transmitted diseases/infections (STD/I). Many sexually transmitted diseases can have life-long impacts, including whether you can have children in the future.

The best choice to prevent both pregnancy and diseases is to not have sex. Abstinence, or deciding not to have sex, is 100% effective at preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases and infections. STD/Is can be passed to you by having close body contact with an infected person, and through passing of bodily fluids such as semen, vaginal fluid and breast milk.

There are a variety of birth control methods and each has pros and cons. To choose the best method for you, talk to your doctor and consider:

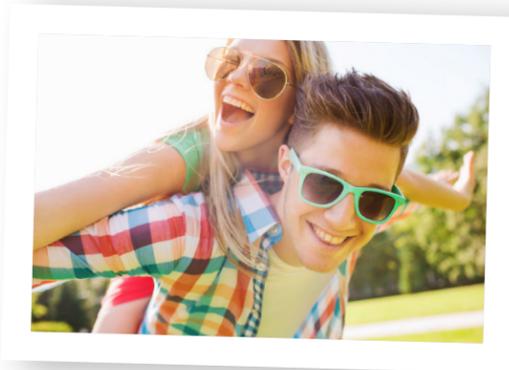
- Your overall health
- Rate of success for each type of birth control
- Your comfort level using the type of birth control

Here are a few important things that you need to know about birth control:

- Using birth control will decrease the chance of getting pregnant if used correctly every time you have sex.
- The Intrauterine devices (IUDs) or the birth control implants are recommended for teens. Both are highly effective in preventing pregnancy. They last for several years and are easy to use. Both are reversible which means you can have them removed at any time. The use of IUDs or birth control implants does not prevent sexually transmitted diseases or infections.
- Using a latex condom correctly every time you have sex is the only way to reduce your risk of getting sexually transmitted diseases/infections.

Visit www.cdc.gov/condomeffectiveness/index.html to learn how to correctly put on a condom, and to get some important do's and don'ts of condom use.

It's important that both you and your partner talk openly and honestly about birth control. Both of you are responsible for making sure you are protected from getting a sexually transmitted disease/infection or having an unwanted pregnancy.



For more detailed information on these and all methods of birth control, how they are used, and how effective they are, visit www.stayteen.org/sex-ed/birth-control-explorer

DID YOU KNOW

The Comprehensive Medical and Dental Program (CMDP) sends a letter to your current home at age 12 encouraging you to talk with your doctor about family planning. CMDP provides several services for free, including birth control. The member manual at www.azdcs.gov/cmdp/members has information about the services provided. If you are 18 or older and on an AHCCCS plan, check out www.azahcccs.gov

FACTS ABOUT STDs AND STIs: SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES/INFECTIONS

A Sexually Transmitted Disease or Sexually Transmitted Infection (STD/STI) is an infection that is spread during vaginal, anal or oral sex with someone who is infected. Some STDs/STIs are spread through contact with the genital areas or by touching infected areas; some can be spread by contact with infected blood, by sharing needles to inject drugs, during childbirth or through a mother's breast milk.

Having a STD/STI also makes it easier for a person to become infected with HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), the virus that causes AIDS (Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome). STDs may allow skin to tear easily through which HIV can enter your body.

Here's how you can protect yourself from getting a STD/STI:

- Not having sex at all (abstinence) is the only 100% effective method for preventing pregnancy and lowering the risk of catching sexually transmitted diseases.
- Have sex only if you and your boy/girlfriend are uninfected and in a faithful relationship with one another.
- Don't have sex with someone you think may have an STD/STI.
- A person with an STD/STI can feel and look healthy and not show signs or symptoms. There are STD/STI tests you and your partner can take to find out if you are infected.
- Talk to your partner about past sex partners and any needle drug use.
- Using a condom correctly every time you have sex is the only protection against STD/STIs. If you are allergic to latex, use plastic (polyurethane) condoms.
- If you plan on using a lubricant, use only water-based lubricants with a condom.

If you are having sex, it is important that you are tested regularly. Talk to your doctor for guidance on how often and which tests you should have. Not all STDs/STIs can be cured, but they can be treated with medication.

If you think you may have been exposed to an STD/STI, don't just hope it will go away. It won't! Get tested immediately to confirm that you have it, and begin treatment. If test results are positive, tell your sexual partner(s) so they can get tested and treated too. Untreated STDs/STIs can damage reproductive organs which may prevent men and women from having children. The tests may be free through your insurance.

References

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, www.cdc.gov

DID YOU KNOW

As a member of the Comprehensive Medical & Dental Program (CMDP), you can get STD/STI testing, treatment and counseling at no cost to you. Check out the section on the Comprehensive Medical & Dental Program for details. www.azdcs.gov/cmdp/members If you are 18 or older and are on an AHCCCS plan check out www.azahcccs.gov.

