

# Artificial birth control

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**Definition of Artificial Birth Control** Artificial birth control can be defined as any product, procedure or practice that uses artificial or unnatural means to prevent pregnancy. Barrier methods such as condoms and diaphragms, hormonal methods such as the pill and IUDs, and surgical sterilization procedures such as a vasectomy or hysterectomy are all considered to be artificial birth control methods. Artificial birth control is also refers to the use of any medication, barrier or device to prevent pregnancy.

Many people use it instead of or in addition to natural family planning, which relies on tracking menstrual cycles, body temperature and consistency of mucus discharge to determine when a woman could conceive. The term "artificial birth control" is most frequently heard in relation to religious teachings on family planning. Many religious groups encourage the use of natural family planning as opposed to artificial birth control, believing that using artificial contraception is contrary to God's will. Certainly, though, there are also non-religious people who choose not to use artificial birth control for personal, ethical or medical reasons.

**Barrier Method** The barrier method is one type of artificial birth control and as the name implies, barrier contraceptives use some sort of barrier to prevent sperm from reaching an egg. Available barrier contraceptives are male condoms, female condoms, diaphragms, cervical caps and contraceptive sponges. Spermicide acts as a chemical barrier and therefore also falls into this category. It is also to prevent pregnancy by killing ejaculated sperm. Spermicide is often used in conjunction with barrier birth control.

**Hormonal Method** Any type of hormonal contraceptive is considered to be artificial birth control.

Although the birth control pill is probably the most common hormonal contraceptive, it's far from being the only one. Other available hormonal contraceptives are the birth control patch, the vaginal ring, Depo-Provera injections, Lunelle injections and the intrauterine device (IUD). Intra-uterine devices (IUDs) are small devices inserted in a woman's uterus. They prevent the fertilization and/or implantation of the egg by changing the mucus around the cervix and the uterine lining. They last for several years. Surgical Sterilization The final type of artificial birth control is surgical sterilization.

For men, the sterilization procedure is called a vasectomy. For women, both tubal ligations (also known as having one's tubes tied) and hysterectomies cause sterilization. It's important to understand, though, that a hysterectomy is typically performed for medical reasons, including cancer or endometriosis. For this reason, a hysterectomy is not usually considered artificial birth control. Alternative Methods If you have decided that artificial birth control methods are not right for you but you aren't yet ready to have a child, you may want to consider natural family planning.

Natural family planning involves tracking your temperature or cervical mucus changes to determine your fertile days. On those days, you abstain from sex to avoid pregnancy. The rhythm method finding your ovulation date based on your menstrual cycle and withdrawals are also considered by some to be natural family planning methods. History Artificial birth control methods have been used for thousands of years. The ancient Egyptians created vaginal suppositories thought to prevent pregnancy, and many cultures used condoms made of linen or animal intestines.