# Non-Prescription Birth Control Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>How well does it work?</th>
<th>How to Use</th>
<th>Pros</th>
<th>Cons</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **External Condom**  | 82%                    | Use a new condom each time you have sex  
After sex, pull out before penis gets soft while holding onto the condom’s rim  
Use a polyurethane condom if you are allergic to latex | Can buy at many stores  
Can put on as part of sex play/foreplay  
Can help prevent early ejaculation  
Can be used for vaginal, oral, and anal sex  
Protects against HIV and many other sexually transmitted infections (STIs)  
Can be used while breastfeeding | Can decrease sensation  
Can cause loss of erection  
Can break or slip off |
| (Latex or Polyurethane) |                        |                                                                           |                                                                      |                                                                      |
| **Internal Condom**  | 79%                    | Use a new condom each time you have sex  
Use extra lubrication as needed | Can put in as part of sex play/foreplay  
Can be used for anal and vaginal sex  
May increase pleasure when used for vaginal sex  
Good for people with latex allergy  
Protects against HIV and other STIs  
Can be used while breastfeeding | Can decrease sensation  
May be noisy  
May be hard to insert  
May slip out of place during sex  
The Internal Condom is only available with a prescription |
| (Polyurethane)       |                        |                                                                           |                                                                      |                                                                      |
| **Spermicide**       | 72%                    | Insert more spermicide each time you have sex  
Insert spermicide deep into vagina shortly before sex  
May use with condoms (to protect against HIV and STIs) | Can buy at many stores  
Can put in as part of sex play/foreplay  
Comes in many forms  
Can be used while breastfeeding | May raise the risk of getting HIV or other STIs  
May irritate vagina or penis  
Cream, gel, and foam can be messy  
Does not protect against HIV or other STIs |
| Cream, gel, sponge, foam, inserts, film | | | | |
| **Withdrawal**       | 78%                    | Pull penis out of vagina before ejaculation (that is, before coming) | Costs nothing  
Can be used while breastfeeding | Less pleasure for some  
Doesn’t work if penis is not pulled out in time  
Does not protect against HIV or other STIs  
Must interrupt sex |
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<td>Fertility Awareness Natural Family Planning</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>Predict fertile days by: 1. taking temperature daily 2. checking vaginal mucus for changes; AND/OR 3. keeping a record of your periods It works best if you use more than one of these Avoid sex or use condoms/spermicide during fertile days. For full instructions: <a href="http://www.americanpregnancy.org/preventingpregnancy/fertilityawarenessNFP.html">http://www.americanpregnancy.org/preventingpregnancy/fertilityawarenessNFP.html</a></td>
<td>Costs little Can be used while breastfeeding Can help with avoiding or trying to become pregnant</td>
<td>Must use another method during fertile days Works best if you have regular cycles Many things to remember with this method Does not protect against HIV or other STIs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breastfeeding (No Periods) Lactation Amenorrhea Method (LAM)</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>Nurse at least every 4 hours during the day Nurse at least every 6 hours during the night Must breastfeed only—no bottles, formula, or food. Works only until: 1. You get your first period OR 2. 6 months after childbirth (whichever comes first)</td>
<td>Costs nothing</td>
<td>Must breastfeed only: can’t use formula or baby food Must breastfeed often Does not protect against HIV or other STIs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emergency Contraception Pills Progestin EC (Plan B One-Step® and others) and ulipristal acetate EC (ella®)</td>
<td>58.94%</td>
<td>Works best the sooner you take it after unprotected sex You can take EC up to 5 days after unprotected sex If pack contains 2 pills, take both together</td>
<td>Can be used while breastfeeding Available at pharmacies, health centers, or health care providers: Call ahead to see if they have it You can get some brands without a prescription</td>
<td>May cause stomach upset or nausea The next period may come early or late May cause spotting Does not protect against HIV or other STIs Ulipristal acetate EC is only available with a prescription People under age 17 need a prescription for some brands. May cost a lot</td>
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