



Two of my friends from chemistry class were going to a free birth control workshop at the school health center. I started the birth control pill when I was 16, mostly to help with my acne and period cramps. I never thought about other options, so I tagged along to see what they had to say.




I joined my friends Jem and Kai in the crowded meeting room.



Kai already put like
three questions
in the box!





Okay we're going to get started!
Today we're here to talk about all the options for birth control.

If you or your partners do not want to get pregnant or want to enjoy the extra benefits of birth control like how they impact your monthly bleeding, there are many options that will meet different needs.

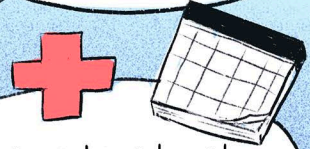
There is a lot to think about when choosing a birth control method.



Some methods require a prescription,



Some cost more than others,



Some you have to get inserted or administered by a clinician, some you take every day and others you don't have to think about for years.

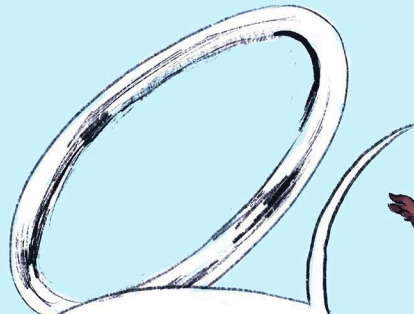
There is something for everyone and by learning about all the methods and talking with a clinician you trust, you can find a method that will work for you, your body, and your life.



Now let's learn about some of these methods and then we'll go to the question and answer box.

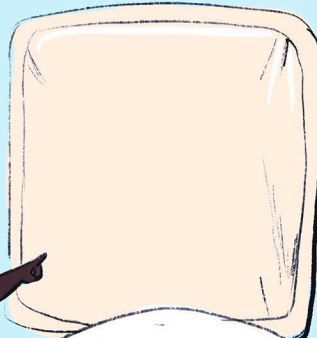
There are three methods that are popular, that all require a prescription, and they all contain the hormones estrogen and progestin:

The Ring



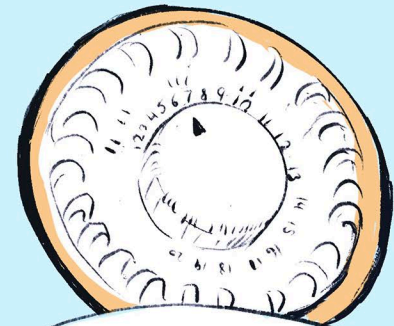
and insert the ring into your vagina for 3 weeks each month.

The Patch



change the patch every week,

The Birth Control Pill



You take the pill every day,

These methods can help with cramps and monthly bleeding. All three contain estrogen, which some people who take testosterone prefer to avoid.

There are also progestin-only pills that you take every day and contain no estrogen.

But what if I don't want to have to worry about taking a pill every day or changing a patch every week?

Great question! People who want something that works on its own may choose LARG

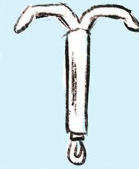
Long Acting Reversible Contraception

This type of birth control includes:



The copper intrauterine device, or IUD for short

The copper IUD lasts for 12 years and contains no hormones.



the progestin IUD,

The progestin IUD lasts for 3-7 years, depending on the type you get.

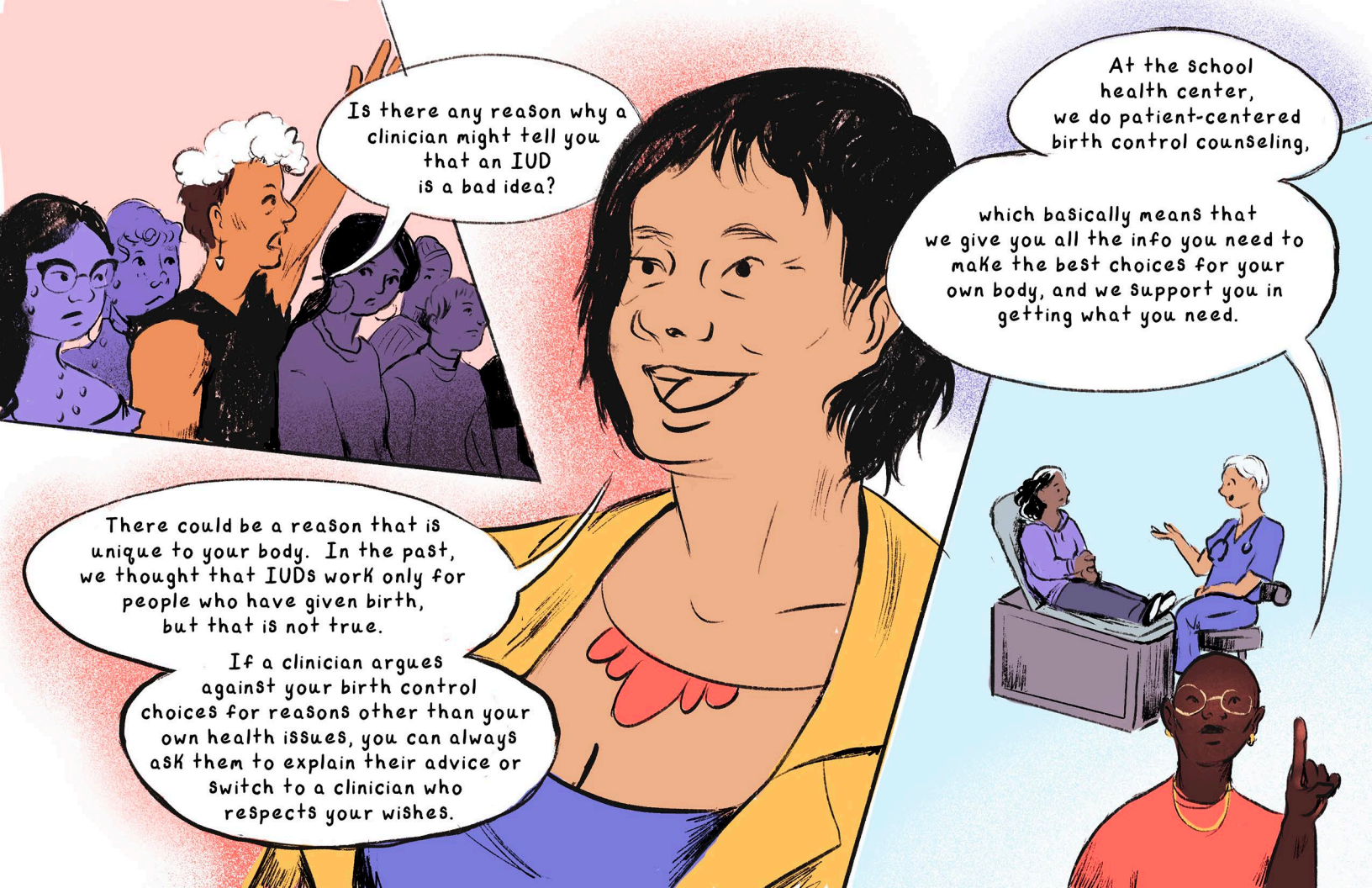
IUDs are inserted into the uterus by a clinician.



and the progestin implant

The progestin implant is inserted into the arm by a clinician and lasts up to 5 years.

These are the methods that work best to prevent pregnancy.



Is there any reason why a clinician might tell you that an IUD is a bad idea?

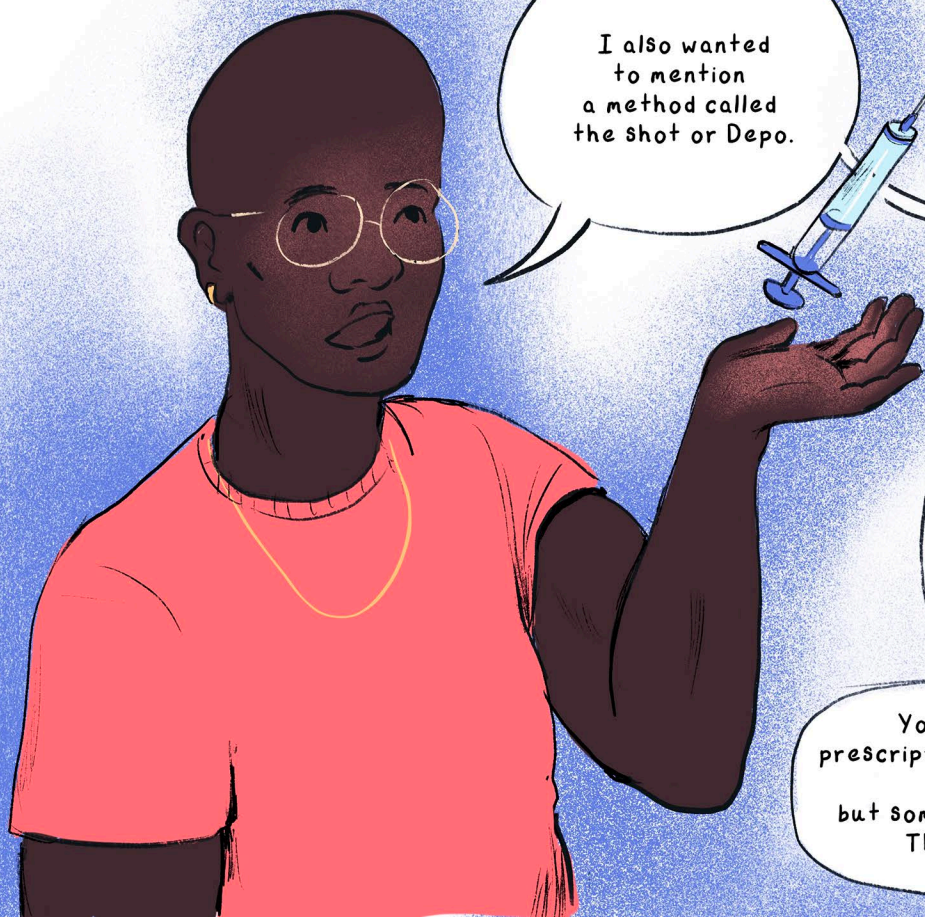
At the school health center, we do patient-centered birth control counseling,

which basically means that we give you all the info you need to make the best choices for your own body, and we support you in getting what you need.

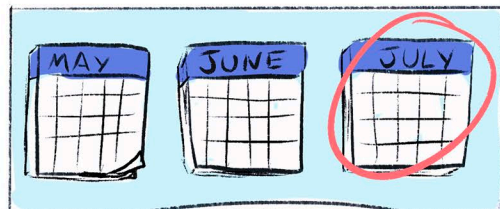
There could be a reason that is unique to your body. In the past, we thought that IUDs work only for people who have given birth, but that is not true.

If a clinician argues against your birth control choices for reasons other than your own health issues, you can always ask them to explain their advice or switch to a clinician who respects your wishes.

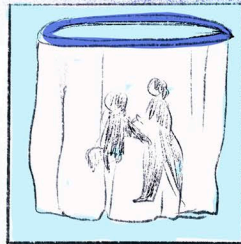





I also wanted to mention a method called the shot or Depo.



You get the shot once every three months.



You can either get the shot at a clinic or get a prescription for a type that you inject yourself at home. People like the shot because it's private, but some people have side effects that turn them off. The shot has no estrogen, only progesterone.



In my gender studies class we learned that many people in the Latinx and Black communities have been targeted and pressured to use the implant, IUD, and other methods. That sounds wrong

Great point! The reproductive justice movement addresses these abuses and others against Black and Brown folks.

We want you to learn about all methods, ask us any questions you have, and decide what is best for you!
It's great to work with a clinician you trust.

None of the options we've discussed so far prevent sexually transmitted infections, or STIs.

For that, we turn to

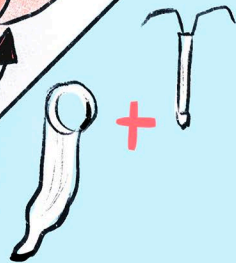
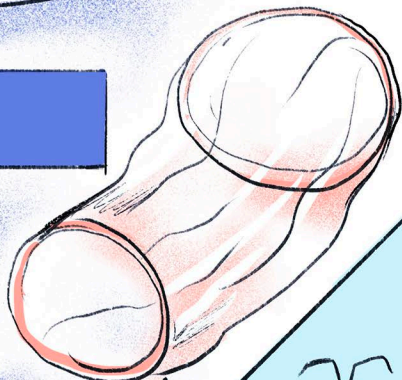
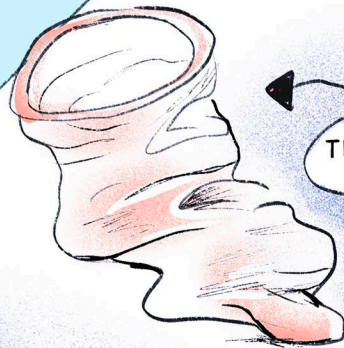
Condoms

There are external condoms

and internal condoms.

Both prevent pregnancy and STIs. You use a new condom each time you have insertive sex.

You can use condoms with any other method to protect against pregnancy AND prevent STIs.



Now let's turn to the
Q&A box.
Someone asked:

What methods can I use
without a prescription?

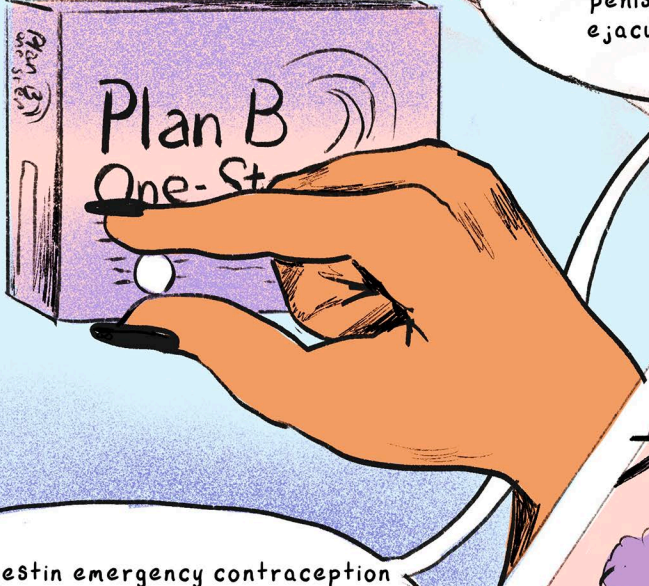
Then there's fertility awareness,
sometimes called natural
family planning. With this method,
a person tracks their
periods, takes their
temperature daily,
and/or checks their
cervical mucus regularly.

Condoms are sold
without a prescription.

These all help the person predict
which days they're at risk for getting
pregnant. They avoid vaginal intercourse,
use a condom, or spermicide on these days.

This method works
for people who have
regular periods
and can stay on top of
tracking all the data.





The last non-prescription method is withdrawal, which is when you pull the penis out of the vagina before ejaculating each time you have vaginal intercourse.

Progestin emergency contraception is also available without a prescription. It can be used up to 5 days after having sex to prevent pregnancy.

There is also a form of emergency contraception called ulipristal acetate that is available by prescription.

sh!

giggle

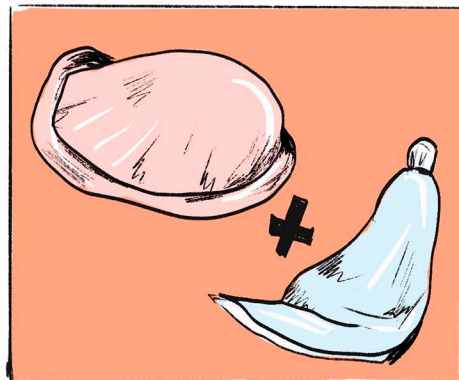
Someone wrote,

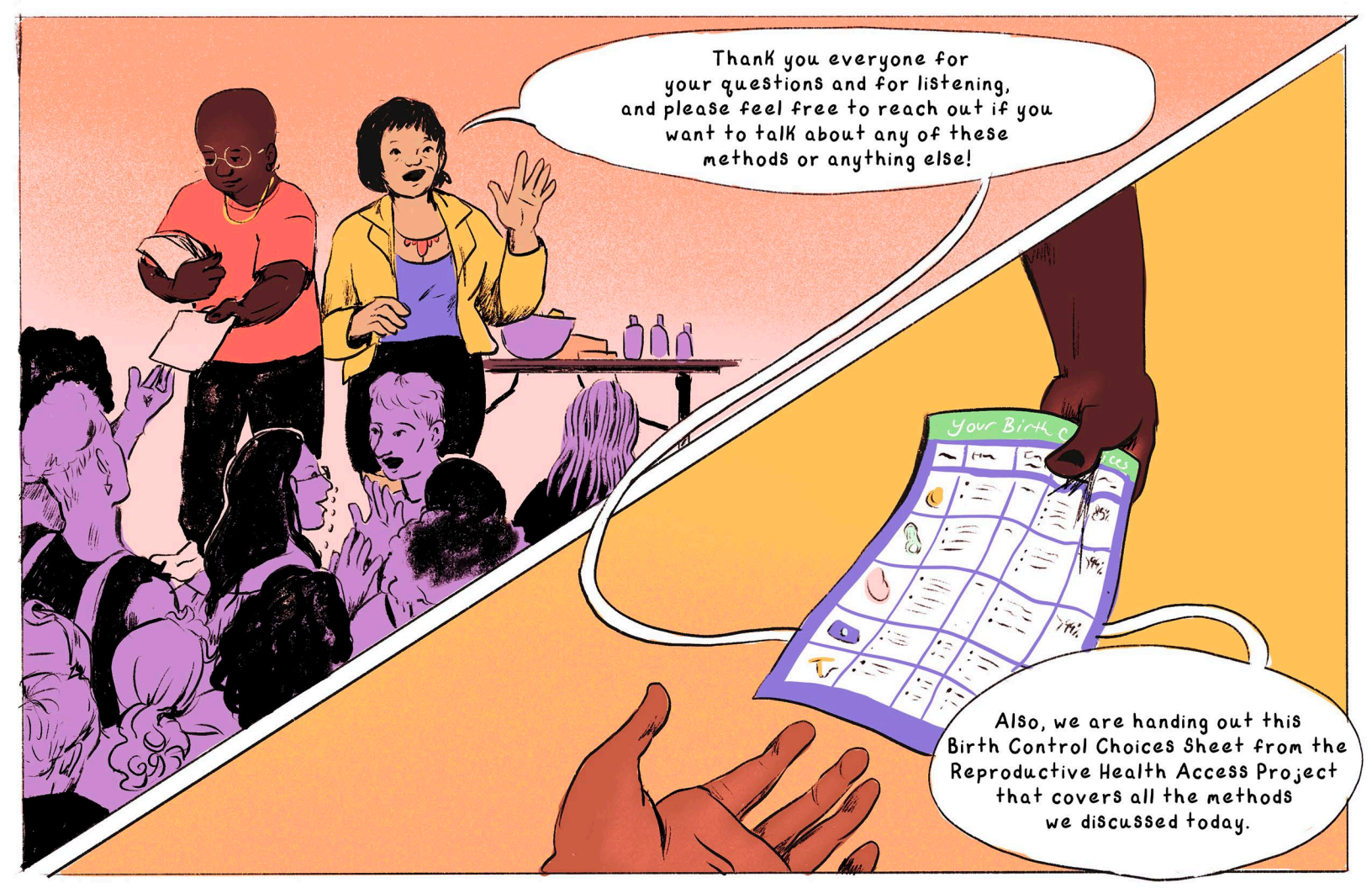
We have time for one
more question from
the Q&A box.

My mom told me about the diaphragm.
What is that?

The diaphragm
is a silicone cup that you
cover with spermicide
and insert each time you
have vaginal intercourse.

You need a prescription
for the diaphragm.





Thank you everyone for
your questions and for listening,
and please feel free to reach out if you
want to talk about any of these
methods or anything else!

Also, we are handing out this
Birth Control Choices Sheet from the
Reproductive Health Access Project
that covers all the methods
we discussed today.





If you want to learn more about
birth control methods, abortion, or miscarriage,
check out reproductiveaccess.org.