

How to Switch Birth Control Methods

No Gaps

What's the best way to switch from one birth control method to another? To lower the chance of getting pregnant, avoid a gap between methods. Go straight from one method to the next, with no gaps between methods.

Do not wait for a period before you stop the old method or start the new one.

Overlap Method

In some cases, you should have a few days of **overlap** – this means starting the new method before stopping the old method. This gives the new method time to start working before the old one wears off. The chart below explains which methods should overlap. It also explains how long the overlap should be. The overlap length appears in **bold** print.

Back-up Method

If you prefer not to overlap the old method and the new method, you can use a back-up method instead. Back-up methods include condoms and spermicide. For example, if you don't want to keep taking the pill after you get your first progestin shot, you can use condoms instead. You should use the back-up method for the same number of days listed in **bold** print in the chart below.

Safe Switching Method

Not sure how to use the chart on the next page? Do this: safely switch to/from one type of birth control to another by going straight from one method to the next one – **no gap!** – and use condoms or spermicide for the first 7 days.

Pill Packs

One note about switching **from** pills: you don't need to finish the birth control pill pack before switching. You can stop taking your pill at any point in the pack. If you are switching **to** pills, you should start by taking the first pill in the pack.

You may have changes in your period after switching. This is normal and safe.

Switching TO:

Switching FROM:	Pill	Patch	Ring	Progestin Shot ("Depo")	Progestin Implant	Hormone IUD Kyleena, Skyla	Hormone IUD Liletta, Mirena	Copper IUD
Pill (Combined and Progestin-only) 	No gap: take 1st pill of new pack the day after taking any pill in old pack.	Start patch 1 day before stopping pill.	No gap: insert ring the day after taking any pill in pack.	Get first shot 7 days before stopping pill.	Insert implant 7 days before stopping pill.	Insert IUD 7 days before stopping pill.	Insert IUD up to 5 days after stopping pill.	Insert copper IUD up to 5 days after stopping pill.
Patch 	Start pill 1 day before stopping patch.		No gap: insert ring and remove patch on the same day.	Get first shot 7 days before stopping patch.	Insert implant 7 days before stopping patch.	Insert IUD 7 days before stopping patch.	Insert IUD up to 5 days after stopping patch.	Insert copper IUD up to 5 days after stopping patch.
Ring 	Start pill 1 day before stopping ring.	Start patch 2 days before stopping ring.		Get first shot 7 days before stopping ring.	Insert implant 7 days before stopping ring.	Insert IUD 7 days before stopping ring.	Insert IUD up to 5 days after stopping ring.	Insert copper IUD up to 5 days after stopping ring.
Progestin shot ("Depo") 	Take 1st pill up to 15 weeks after the last shot.	Start patch up to 15 weeks after the last shot.	Insert ring up to 15 weeks after the last shot.		Insert implant up to 15 weeks after the last shot.	Insert IUD up to 15 weeks after the last shot.	Insert IUD up to 16 weeks after the last shot.	Insert copper IUD up to 16 weeks after the last shot.
Progestin implant 	Start pill 7 days before implant is removed.	Start patch 7 days before implant is removed.	Start ring 7 days before implant is removed.	Get first shot 7 days before implant is removed.		Insert IUD 7 days before implant is removed.	Insert IUD up to 5 days after implant is removed.	Insert copper IUD up to 5 days after implant is removed.
Hormone IUD 	Start pill 7 days before IUD is removed.	Start patch 7 days before IUD is removed.	Start ring 7 days before IUD is removed.	Get first shot 7 days before IUD is removed.	Insert implant 4 days before IUD is removed.			Insert copper IUD right after hormone IUD is removed.
Copper IUD 	Start pill 7 days before IUD is removed.	Start patch 7 days before IUD is removed.	Start ring 7 days before IUD is removed.	Get first shot 7 days before IUD is removed.	Insert implant 4 days before IUD is removed.	Insert hormone IUD right after copper IUD is removed. Use back-up method for 7 days .	Insert hormone IUD right after copper IUD is removed.	

Chart adapted from [AAFP Preventing Gaps When Switching Contraceptives](#)

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