



Your Options for Birth Control



birth control for women

Pregnancy can be high risk in certain types of congenital heart disease. Ask your cardiologist if pregnancy is safe for you.

There are many different birth control methods for women who have congenital heart disease.

Some methods have increased risks for certain types of congenital heart defects.

Talk with members of your adult congenital heart disease (ACHD) team about which birth control options are best for you.

It is important to match the method of birth control you choose with your congenital heart defect. There are 4 general types of birth control:

- barrier methods (condoms, diaphragms)
- intrauterine devices (IUDs)
- hormonal methods (birth control pills, injections, implants or vaginal rings)
- sterilization (surgical or nonsurgical).

Barrier Methods

Condoms and diaphragms are safe. Condoms are available for men and women. A diaphragm is a silicone cup you insert into your vagina. You need to use a spermicide with these to help prevent pregnancy.

Intrauterine Devices (IUDs)

IUDs are safe. There are two different kinds:

- a copper IUD (ParaGard®). This has an increased risk of bleeding and infection. It lasts for 10 years.
- a progestin-releasing IUD (Mirena® or Skyla®). This can cause you to stop having periods. The Mirena IUD lasts up to 5 years and the Skyla IUD lasts up to 3 years.



MINNEAPOLIS
HEART
INSTITUTE



ABBOTT
NORTHWESTERN
HOSPITAL



Hormonal Methods

- Birth control pills are not all the same.
 - Progestin-only pills (Micronor® and Nor QD®) are safe. You need to take the pill at the **exact** same time every day. You may have irregular bleeding. Over time, you may stop have periods.
 - Estrogen-containing methods (Ortho-Tricyclen®, Ortho Evra® and NuvaRing®) are **not** safe for some people with congenital heart defects (such as people with a Fontan) because they increase your risk for blood clots.
- Injectable birth control (Depo-Provera®) is safe. You need a shot every 3 months. It can cause irregular periods, vaginal spotting and weight gain. You may stop having your period.
- Implantable birth control (Nexplanon®) is safe. It is a small, plastic rod that is inserted under the skin of your upper arm. It lasts for 3 years. It can cause headaches, acne and weight gain.

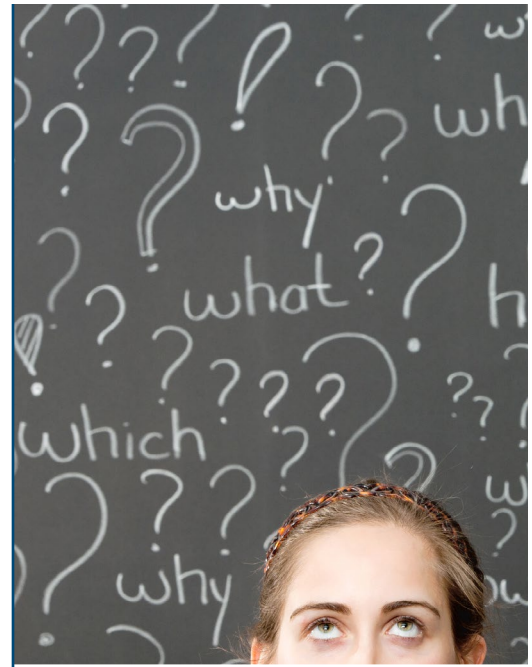
Sterilization

This may be a good option if you **do not** want to have a baby or if you have complex congenital heart disease and tried long-term methods such as the implantable method or IUD. You can have surgery (having your fallopian tubes tied) or have an insert (Essure®) placed to close your fallopian tubes. Both have risks but the insert is safer than surgery. You will need a back-up method of birth control until the Essure procedure has worked (about 3 months).

Avoid birth control that uses estrogen

Avoid birth control methods that include estrogen if you:

- have a history of blood clots or clotting disorder
- have poor heart function
- have a Fontan
- have cyanotic heart disease
- have high lung pressures
- have high blood pressure not under control
- have a history of heart attack or stroke
- are older than age 35 and smoke.



How to Choose

Choice of birth control is specific to your health.

Some heart conditions can increase your risk of forming blood clots. Birth control that contains estrogen also increases your risk of clots. (See the box to the left.)

Your ACHD team will help you choose an option that is safest for you. Together, you will make the decision based on your health, risks and preferences.

