

# Lesson 16

## Preventing Pregnancy

### Overview

In this lesson, students learn about some commonly used birth control methods. After brainstorming a list of contraceptive methods they may have heard about, students learn about how different types of methods work and their effectiveness. A team game helps students distinguish which methods offer little or no protection, which protect from pregnancy only and which help protect from HIV and other STD as well as pregnancy.

**Time:** 45–60 minutes

*Note: If time is limited, the assessment activity sheet may be completed as homework. This lesson should be taught after students have learned about STDs, including HIV, as well as how pregnancy occurs. Be prepared to review or explain reproductive anatomy and the process of fertilization, if needed.*

*The methods are presented in order of effectiveness. This helps place an emphasis on abstinence and on long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) methods, which are safe and effective choices for young people.*

### National Health Education Standards

#### Standard 1: Comprehending Concepts

#### Performance Indicator

**1.8.1:** Analyze the relationship between healthy behaviors and personal health.

### Lesson Objectives

**Students will be able to:**

1. Describe ways sexually active people can reduce the risk of pregnancy through effective use of contraceptives.
2. Describe why sexual abstinence is the safest, most effective way to avoid pregnancy.

## Materials & Preparation

### Prepare

- Review your school and district guidelines around discussing birth control in the classroom and select the methods you will cover in this lesson. (*Note: If you decide to cover emergency contraception, be sure to emphasize that it is not to be used as a regular birth control method, but only when another method fails or rape is involved.*)
- *Optional:* Have samples of the selected birth control methods to show to students.
- Prepare **Birth Control Cards**, enough for each group of 4 or 5 students to have a set.
- Prepare activity sheet for students: **Preventing Pregnancy**.
- *Optional:* Distribute the **Student Journal** for this lesson.

### Review

- **Preventing Pregnancy Key**
- **Scoring Rubric**

## Health Terms

Review the teaching steps, master and activity sheet for any terms or concepts your students may not know, and be prepared to explain these before students begin work. Examples:

- abstinence
- barrier
- birth control
- cervix
- condom
- consistently
- contraception
- Depo-Provera
- effective
- ejaculate
- external (male) condom
- hormone
- hormonal
- implant
- internal (female) condom
- IUD
- long-acting reversible contraception (LARC)
- ovaries
- over the counter
- prescription
- semen
- sexual intercourse
- sexually active
- spermicide
- sponge
- STD (sexually transmitted disease)
- suppository
- torso
- uterus
- vagina
- withdrawal

## Support for Diverse Learners

*To ensure student success with comprehending concepts:*

- Pre-teach new concepts and terms. Write new terms on the board. Frequently use verbal checks for comprehension.
- Review reproductive anatomy and the process of fertilization before teaching the lesson.
- Teach a mini-lesson using visual aids of male and female anatomy to discuss anatomy and birth control methods.

*To ensure student success with reading:*

- Be sure each student team contains both students with stronger reading skills or a peer tutor and students who may need help reading the methods on the **Birth Control Cards**.

*To ensure student success with writing:*

- Pair students with stronger writing skills or peer tutors with students who may need help completing the **Preventing Pregnancy** activity sheet. Allow students to draw or record their responses.

# Introduction

## ■ Get students ready for learning

### Transition

Becoming sexually active carries certain risks and consequences. On a piece of paper, list as many of those consequences as you can in 1 minute.

*Allow students to focus and work quietly. Call time after 1 minute and have each student read one of the consequences he or she described until there are no new ideas to share.*

### Motivate

One of the potential consequences of sexual intercourse between a male person and a female person is a pregnancy. Today we're going to be learning more about ways to prevent pregnancy. This is called *birth control* or *contraception*.

What do you think of when you hear the term *birth control*?

*Allow students to respond to the question and discuss their ideas. Make a list of key points or any methods students name on the board.*

What are some methods of birth control you've heard about?

*Allow students to respond to the question and add any additional methods to the list on the board.*

When a person makes the choice to become sexually active, avoiding unwanted pregnancy is a very important responsibility. Most teens aren't currently sexually active. But they need to understand different methods of preventing a pregnancy and consider their birth control options so they will be ready to prevent pregnancy in the future. Today, you're going to learn about some common birth control methods and look at how well they work.

## Teaching Steps

### ■ Review how pregnancy occurs

#### Explain

A pregnancy can happen any time a people have vaginal sex, if a male sperm reaches and fertilizes a ripe egg in the female’s fallopian tube. The fertilized egg will then travel to the uterus. Once it implants in the lining of the uterus and begins to grow, the person is pregnant. It only takes one sperm to reach an egg for fertilization to occur. This is why pregnancy can easily happen if a male/female couple doesn’t take steps to prevent it by using birth control.

#### Ask & Discuss

What is the surest way to not become pregnant or cause a pregnancy?

*Allow students to respond to the question and discuss their ideas.*

#### Summarize

You can’t get pregnant or get someone pregnant if you don’t have sex. Staying abstinent, or choosing not to have sex, prevents pregnancy 100 percent of the time. It’s free, you don’t have to see a doctor or go to a clinic to get it, and it protects you from *STD* (sexually transmitted disease) too.

### ■ Teach about prescribed methods of birth control

#### Explain

To obtain some methods of birth control, a person needs a prescription from a doctor. Some of these methods work by regulating hormones involved in the reproductive process. *Hormones* are chemicals that affect body functions, so these methods use a dose of hormones to cause changes in the female body that prevent the egg from being fertilized.

These methods are highly effective if used correctly. And, with some of them, there’s nothing else a person has to do once they are in place.

## Review

Which of the methods you've named so far are hormonal methods?

*Return to the list on the board and help students identify those that are considered hormonal methods. Add any additional methods to the list as you describe them, using the notes below. If you have samples of the various birth control methods, show these as you talk about each one.*

- An **IUD** or **intrauterine device** is a small piece of plastic, often shaped like a “T,” that’s inserted into the uterus. It is a form of long-acting reversible contraception. Some IUDs release hormones that prevent pregnancy the same way as the pill, patch and ring. Another kind of IUD is wrapped with copper wire. It prevents pregnancy by affecting the way the sperm move and preventing them from fertilizing the egg. The IUD is a very effective, long-term method of birth control. It can stay in the uterus for 3 to 10 years depending on what type it is. IUDs must be inserted and removed by a health care provider.
- The **implant** is a thin rod of flexible plastic that is put under the skin of the upper arm by a health care provider. Like the IUD, it is a long-lasting form of birth control and will continue to release hormones into the body to prevent pregnancy for 3 years. Like other hormonal methods, it is very effective and has the advantage that the person doesn’t have to remember to take a pill, change the patch or ring, or make an appointment with a health care provider to get a shot.
- **Depo-Provera** or the **shot** is a birth control method that lasts for 3 months at a time. The person receives a shot of artificial hormones from a health care provider every 3 months. It prevents pregnancy in much the same way as other hormonal methods—by preventing the ovaries from releasing an egg and making the mucus in the cervix thicker so sperm can’t enter. It is very effective as long as the person goes to a health care provider to get the shot every 3 months.
- **Birth control pills** contain artificial hormones and prevent pregnancy by stopping the ovaries from releasing an egg each month, and/or by thickening the mucus in the cervix (the opening to the uterus) so sperm can’t easily enter. Birth control pills must be prescribed by a health care provider and be taken daily. They are very effective and simple to use as long as the person remembers to take the pill each day at the same time and doesn’t skip any days.

- The **birth control patch** is a thin plastic square worn on the skin that slowly releases artificial hormones into the body. It prevents pregnancy in the same way as the pill. A new patch is applied each week. Like the pill, the patch must be prescribed by a health care provider. It is also very effective and simple to use, as long as the person remembers to wear it and change it each week.
- The **birth control ring** is a soft, flexible ring that is inserted into the vagina. It releases artificial hormones to prevent pregnancy in the same way as the pill and the patch. The ring must be prescribed by a health care provider and changed once a month. It is very effective as long as the person remembers to change it each month.

### Summarize

Hormonal methods of birth control and IUDs are very effective at preventing pregnancy, but they do *not* prevent sexually transmitted diseases. Therefore, if people use one of these methods for pregnancy prevention, they should also use latex or plastic condoms to help protect themselves against HIV and other STDs.

## ■ Teach about barrier methods of birth control

### Explain

One way to prevent a pregnancy from happening is to prevent the male sperm from reaching the female egg. *Abstinence*—choosing not to do any sexual behavior that can result in pregnancy or sexually transmitted disease—is an obvious way to do this. But there are also birth control methods called barrier methods that work in this way.

### Ask & Discuss

What is a “barrier”? How does it work?

*Allow students to respond to the questions and discuss their ideas.*

### Summarize

A barrier is something that gets in the way or keeps things apart. A physical barrier, such as a fence or a wall, works better, or is more *effective*, when it is difficult to pass through, get around or climb over. The birth control methods known as barrier methods create a barrier to keep sperm from reaching an egg when people have vaginal intercourse.

## Review

Which of the methods you've named so far are barrier methods?

*Return to the list on the board and help students identify those that are considered barrier methods. Add any additional methods to the list as you describe them, using the notes below. If you have samples of the various birth control methods, show these as you talk about each one.*

- **Condoms** are one of the most popular barrier methods of birth control. A **male** or **external condom** is a sheath or covering that fits over the erect penis during sexual activity to keep semen from entering a partner's body. The condom acts as a barrier to prevent sperm from entering the vagina and female reproductive tract so the sperm can't fertilize an egg. This kind of condom is put on right before having sex once the penis is erect.

The **female** or **internal condom** is a soft, loose-fitting polyurethane (plastic) or nitrile sheath that fits inside and lines the vagina. Polyurethane is unlikely to rip or tear during use or to cause allergic reactions. This kind of condom can be inserted right before sex, or up to 8 hours ahead of time. It is a good option for people who choose to have sexual intercourse and don't want to depend on a partner to use a male condom.

Condoms made of latex or plastic will also help keep STD germs from passing between sex partners. In fact, condoms are the only method of birth control—other than abstinence—that protect people from STD, including HIV, in addition to preventing pregnancy. When condoms are used correctly *every time* a person has sex they are a very effective method of both birth control and STD prevention. Condoms can be purchased at drug stores and some grocery stores or online, or obtained from a clinic. Anyone can buy them without a prescription.

- **The sponge** is a method that works as a barrier and a spermicide (chemical that kills sperm). With clean hands, a person wets the sponge with clean water, gently squeezes the sponge until it foams up, folds the sides and inserts the sponge into the vagina, similar to inserting a tampon. The sponge can be inserted up to 24 hours before intercourse and must be left in place at least 6 hours after intercourse. The sponge should never stay in the vagina for more than 30 hours. The sponge does not protect people from HIV or other STDs, so they should also use a condom.

- **Foam, film** and **suppositories** are other barrier methods of birth control that use *spermicides*—chemicals that kill sperm—to prevent pregnancy. These products are put into the vagina before having sex. While a condom forms a physical barrier that keeps the sperm from entering the vagina, spermicides create a chemical barrier that kills the sperm before they can reach and fertilize the egg.

Spermicides don't kill HIV or other STD germs, however, so they won't protect people from STD. Spermicides are much more effective at preventing pregnancy if they are used along with a condom or other birth control method. They are only somewhat effective on their own. Like condoms, they are available over the counter, without a prescription. Spermicides can sometimes cause an allergic reaction or skin irritation, which could make a person more vulnerable to HIV or other STD transmission.

*(Note: If the list of birth control methods students brainstormed includes the diaphragm, cervical cap, tubal ligation or vasectomy, you can acknowledge and briefly describe how these methods keep the sperm from reaching the egg, if there is student interest. But explain that this lesson focuses on the methods teens are most likely to have access to and use.)*

## ■ **Optional: Teach about emergency contraception**

### **Explain**

Emergency contraception is a method of birth control that can be used to help prevent a pregnancy after a person has had unprotected sex. It works best when used right away, and must be used within 3 to 5 days after having sex. There are 2 types available in the United States: emergency birth control pills, which contain artificial hormones, and the copper-T IUD, which is inserted into the uterus by a health care provider.

It's very important to understand that emergency birth control is NOT a regular method of birth control. It should be used only in an emergency, when a regular birth control method has failed or been forgotten, or in cases of rape. People who are sexually active need to choose a regular birth control method and use it correctly and *consistently* to prevent pregnancy.

## ■ Discuss ineffective methods of birth control

### Explain

All of the birth control methods we've been discussing (except emergency contraception) can be good choices for teens if or when they become sexually active. Remember that abstinence—choosing not to do any sexual behavior that could result in pregnancy or STD—is always the safest choice for teens. For teens who decide to become sexually active, using latex or plastic condoms every time—alone or with another form of birth control—will offer protection from STD, including HIV, as well as pregnancy.

### Review

There are also some methods teens may try that don't work well for birth control. Based on what you've just learned about effective methods, why do you think these methods wouldn't be good choices and could put a person at high risk of getting pregnant or causing a pregnancy?

*Return to the list of methods students brainstormed at the beginning of class and review to see if withdrawal, douching or any other ineffective methods of birth control are listed. Underline any that are on the list and add any additional ones to the list as you describe them, using the notes below.*

- **Withdrawal** is when the penis is taken out of the vagina before a person ejaculates or comes. Withdrawal is not an effective way to prevent pregnancy for several reasons. There may be some semen at the end of the penis before ejaculation, and the pre-ejaculate fluid that passes through a male urethra before the semen sometimes contains sperm that could enter the vagina even before ejaculation. It can also be difficult, particularly for younger males, to exercise the self-control needed to withdraw or to tell exactly when they will ejaculate.
- **Douching** is washing out the vagina immediately after sex. The idea is to flush out or kill any sperm that may be in the reproductive tract. This just doesn't work. Sperm swim very quickly and many of them will have already reached the cervix and entered the uterus by the time a person douches. Plus, douches don't contain any ingredients that would work as a spermicide.

- **Hoping you won't get pregnant** definitely won't work. It's possible for a couple to have unprotected vaginal sex without getting pregnant right away. But if they continue to have sex without using birth control, chances are about 90% that they will experience a pregnancy within a year.

*(Note: If natural family planning or the “rhythm” method is mentioned, be sure to explain that while some adult couples use this method for philosophical or religious reasons, it’s not recommended for teens because it requires a great deal of focus, attention and time. Dispel any myths students may hold about there being “safe times of the month.”)*

## ■ Students categorize birth control methods

### Review

Let's play a game to review what you've learned about birth control methods.

*Put students into teams of 4 or 5 and distribute a set of **Birth Control Cards** to each team. Tell them not to look at the cards until you give the signal.*

Each card has the name of a birth control method we discussed today. After I tell you to begin, you'll have 1 minute to work together to sort the cards into 3 piles:

1. Methods that can effectively prevent *both* pregnancy and STD/HIV
2. Methods that can effectively prevent pregnancy only
3. Methods that don't work at all or are ineffective

*Clarify any questions, then give teams the signal to begin. Allow 1 minute for students to sort the cards.*

*Then ask the following questions, calling on different teams to share which cards they put in each category and why.*

- How many cards do you have in the first category—Methods that can effectively prevent *both* pregnancy and STD/HIV? What are they? Why are these methods effective against *both* kinds of risks?
- How many cards do you have in the second category—Methods that can effectively prevent pregnancy only? What are they? How do these methods work?

- How many cards do you have in the last category—Methods that don't work at all or are ineffective? What are they? Why are these ineffective ways to prevent pregnancy?

*Affirm correct answers and correct any misperceptions.*

## Summarize

One of the most important things to remember about birth control is that it needs to be used correctly and consistently. This means it needs to be used or in place every time people have vaginal intercourse.

# Assessment & Closure

## ■ Students demonstrate learning

### Complete

*Distribute the **Preventing Pregnancy** activity sheet to students.*

Read the situation and answer the questions.

*Allow time for students to complete the activity sheet.*

## ■ End the lesson

### Close

There is no single method of birth control that will be right for everyone. It's important for people who are sexually active to get the facts about birth control so they can make an informed choice and find a method they will use correctly and consistently to protect themselves from unintended pregnancy.

What is the only birth control method that is 100% effective?

*Allow students to respond until someone says "abstinence."*

### Assess

*Collect students' **Preventing Pregnancy** activity sheets, and evaluate their work for this lesson.*

## **Assessment Evidence**

### **Objective 1**

**Students described ways sexually active people can reduce the risk of pregnancy through effective use of contraceptives by:**

- Completing the **Preventing Pregnancy** activity sheet.

### **Objective 2**

**Students described why sexual abstinence is the safest, most effective way to avoid pregnancy by:**

- Completing the **Preventing Pregnancy** activity sheet.

# Birth Control Cards

**Directions:** Copy and cut apart the cards. Make 1 set for each team of 4 or 5 students.

**Abstinence**

**Birth Control  
Ring**

**Birth Control  
Pill**

**Douching**

**Birth Control  
Patch**

**External  
(Male)  
Condoms**

# Birth Control Cards *(continued)*

**Directions:** Copy and cut apart the cards. Make 1 set for each team of 4 or 5 students.

**Foam, Film or  
Suppositories**

**Internal  
(Female)  
Condom**

**Hoping You  
Won't Get  
Pregnant**

**IUD**

**Implant**

**Shot  
(Depo-Provera)**

# Birth Control Cards *(continued)*

**Directions:** Copy and cut apart the cards. Make 1 set for each team of 4 or 5 students.

**Sponge**

**Withdrawal**

# Preventing Pregnancy Key

**Directions:** Read the following situation and answer the questions.

## ► Situation

Your older sister is a senior in high school. She just told you that she and her boyfriend have started having sex. When you asked her what she was using for birth control she said, "He pulls out before he comes, and I haven't gotten pregnant yet, so we don't have to worry about it."

- ① **What "method" are your sister and her boyfriend using to avoid getting pregnant, and why won't it work?**

*Withdrawal (and hope). This is an ineffective method because some sperm could leave the penis and enter the vagina before the man withdraws or pulls out. Also, her boyfriend may not remember to withdraw or may not accurately predict when he will ejaculate. If the sister and her boyfriend continue to have unprotected sex, chances are very good that she will become pregnant.*

- ② **What would be the surest way for your sister and her boyfriend to protect themselves from pregnancy and why?**

*Abstinence or choosing not to have sex is the only sure way to avoid pregnancy. If a person doesn't do any sexual behaviors that can cause pregnancy or pass STD, he or she can't get pregnant or infected.*

- ③ **What birth control method could your sister and her boyfriend use to reduce their risk of STD as well as pregnancy?**

*Using latex or plastic condoms correctly every time they have sex will help protect them from both pregnancy and STD.*

- ④ **Describe at least 3 other methods of birth control that your sister and her boyfriend could use and explain how each one works.**

- An IUD is a small piece of plastic inserted into the uterus. Some release hormones that prevent pregnancy the same way as the pill, patch and ring. IUDs wrapped with copper wire prevent pregnancy by affecting the way the sperm move. An IUD doesn't protect people from STD.*
- The implant is a thin rod of flexible plastic that is put under the skin of a person's upper arm by a health care provider. It releases hormones into the body. The implant doesn't protect people from STD.*

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# Preventing Pregnancy Key

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## Question 4 answer continued

- Depo-Provera or the shot a shot of artificial hormones a person receives from a health care provider every 3 months. It prevents pregnancy by preventing the ovaries from releasing an egg and making the mucus in the cervix thicker so sperm can't enter. The shot doesn't protect people from STD.
- Birth control pills contain artificial hormones and prevent pregnancy by stopping the ovaries from releasing an egg each month, and/or by thickening the mucus in the cervix (the opening to the uterus) so sperm can't easily enter. They don't protect people from STD.
- Birth control patch is a thin plastic square worn on the skin that slowly releases artificial hormones into the body to prevent pregnancy in the same way as the pill and the ring. It doesn't protect people from STD.
- Birth control ring is a soft, flexible ring inserted into the vagina that releases artificial hormones to prevent pregnancy in the same way as the pill and the patch. It doesn't protect people from STD.
- The sponge is a barrier method that use chemicals (spermicides) that kill sperm before they can reach and fertilize the egg. It is put into the vagina before a woman has sex. It doesn't protect people from STD.

# Preventing Pregnancy

**Directions:** Read the following situation and answer the questions.

## ► Situation

Your older sister is a senior in high school. She just told you that she and her boyfriend have started having sex. When you asked her what she was using for birth control she said, “He pulls out before he comes, and I haven’t gotten pregnant yet, so we don’t have to worry about it.”

- ① What “method” are your sister and her boyfriend using to avoid getting pregnant, and why won’t it work?

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- ② What would be the surest way for your sister and her boyfriend to protect themselves from pregnancy and why?

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- ③ What birth control method could your sister and her boyfriend use to reduce their risk of STD as well as pregnancy?

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- ④ Describe at least 3 other methods of birth control that your sister and her boyfriend could use and explain how each one works.

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## Lesson 16 • Preventing Pregnancy

<b>Preventing Pregnancy Activity Sheet</b>				
<b>Objective</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. Ways Sexually Active People Can Reduce Risk of Pregnancy Through Effective Use of Contraceptives</b>	Clearly and correctly explains why withdrawal is not an effective method of birth control. <b>AND</b> Clearly identifies condoms as a birth control method that protects from both pregnancy and STD. <b>AND</b> Clearly and correctly describes 3 or more effective birth control methods and explains how each one works to prevent pregnancy.	Somewhat correctly explains why withdrawal is not an effective method of birth control. <b>AND</b> Identifies condoms as a birth control method that protects from both pregnancy and STD. <b>AND</b> Clearly and correctly describes 2 effective birth control methods and explains how each one works to prevent pregnancy.	States that withdrawal is not an effective method of birth control without explaining why. <b>AND</b> Identifies condoms as a birth control method that protects from both pregnancy and STD. <b>AND</b> Clearly and correctly describes 1 effective birth control method and explains how it works to prevent pregnancy.	Does not identify withdrawal as an ineffective method of birth control. <b>AND</b> Does not identify condoms as a birth control method that protects from both pregnancy and STD. <b>AND/OR</b> Does not correctly describe effective birth control methods or explain how they work to prevent pregnancy.
<b>2. Abstinence Is Safest, Most Effective Way to Avoid Pregnancy</b>	Clearly and correctly describes sexual abstinence as the surest way for the sister and her boyfriend to avoid pregnancy and explains why.	Clearly states that sexual abstinence is the surest way for the sister and her boyfriend to avoid pregnancy, but provides a vague explanation as to why.	States that sexual abstinence is a good way for the sister and her boyfriend to avoid pregnancy, but doesn't provide an explanation.	Does not describe sexual abstinence as the surest way for the sister and her boyfriend to avoid pregnancy.

**Scale:** **4** = Exceeds expectations   **3** = Meets expectations   **2** = Mostly meets expectations   **1** = Does not meet expectations



