Examples

The following pages contain “before and after” examples of health education materials developed for clients. Each example has a brief description, the original document and the revised, easier-to-read version. The changes made between the before and after documents are based upon the methods outlined in this toolkit. To highlight the power of language, changes have not been made to the overall layout of the document; however, when revising and creating documents of your own, it is important to consider the aesthetics of the document.
Before & After Example #1

Birth Control Pills Pamphlet

This example is designed to illustrate the importance of layout and being selective of which information to include.

The original pamphlet has a reading level of approximately 10th grade. While the information provided is important, it is very text-dense, which can overwhelm someone who is not a strong reader.

The revised handout has a readability score of 8th grade and a dramatically increased amount of white space. Additionally the bulleted lists help present the information in a logical way.

Also, it is important to remember that you will never be able to replace client-provider conversations with written materials. If you feel your writing is getting too detailed, it probably is. Try to narrow down the writing to the most important information for a majority of clients.
If You Forget

If you miss one pill: Take it as soon as you remember and then continue taking one pill each day at your usual time. You do not need to double up. You are still protected from pregnancy.

If you miss two or more pills in a row:
Take only the last missed pill as soon as you remember and then continue to take one pill each day at your usual time plus use condoms or abstain until you have taken seven pills.
Also:
- If the missed pills were in the 1st week of the pack and you have had unprotected sex, you need to take emergency contraception.
- If the missed pills were in the 3rd week of the pack:
  - Finish the pills left in the 3rd week
  - Throw away the last week of pills (the “reminder” pills)
  - Start a new pack right away
You are still protected. You won’t have a period that cycle, but may experience some spotting.

With any missed pills you might have spotting or bleeding, so try to take them at about the same time each day.

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE PILL USE

- Find a time of day to take your pills that works for you.
- Set your cell phone to remind you
- Have your partner remind you
- Keep an extra pack of pills on hand
- Have Emergency Contraception on hand (or call for it!)

AGENCY NAME AND LOGO

About Your Birth Control Pills

Address of site one
555.555.5555

Address of site two
555.555.5551

Address of site three
555.555.5552

Address of site four
555.555.5553

EC On-Call Weekends and Holidays
1.800.555.5554

1/2007
Birth Control Pill Basics

- There are many brands of birth control pills, all of them are safe and effective. You may like the first one you try or you may need to try several before you find the one that's right for you.

- Pills give you excellent pregnancy protection. Typically, five out of 100 women on the pill might become pregnant in a year. Without birth control, it's 85 out of 100!

- The longer you take birth control pills, the more protection you get from ovarian and uterine cancer.

- Pills give you lighter, shorter, more regular bleeding each month with less cramping. They can also improve acne.

- With some brands, you can safely choose to skip any period or have only four periods a year. Ask a Health Quarters clinician for more info.

- Studies show that the pill will not cause weight gain.

- Emergency contraception is a type of birth control pill that can be used if:
  - You are two or more days late starting a new pack of pills
  - You miss two or more pills in the 1st week of pills
  - You have unprotected sex in the 1st week of your first pack of pills

My Pill ________________

- Start today.
  You are protected once you have taken seven pills.

- Start the first day of your period.
  You are protected right away.

- Start on the Sunday after your period begins.

- If period starts on Sunday: Take your 1st pill then. You are protected right away.

- Period starts on any other day: Wait for Sunday to take your 1st pill. You're protected when you've taken seven pills.

- Start your pills on ________.

- Use condoms or abstain for ____ days.

- In the time between the 1st and 7th pill, do not have sex or use condoms. If you have unprotected sex, take emergency contraception and continue to take a pill each day. You'll be protected again once you have taken seven pills.

- Continue to take a pill every day at about the same time. If you take a pill late, you may spot or bleed. This is not serious, but it can be troublesome.

- Your period should come during the last week of pills. The last seven pills in the pack are “reminder” pills. You are protected during this week— even if you forget any of these pills.

- When you finish one pack, immediately start the next one. Start even if you are still bleeding. If your period was very light, or you didn’t bleed at all.

Things to Remember

- Use condoms for protection from sexually-transmitted diseases.

- Minor side effects - breast tenderness, nausea, spotting or bleeding, mood changes - usually go away once you get used to the pills.

- Blood clots in your veins are rare but serious complications of the pill. Smoking, especially in women over 35, and those with an inherited clotting problem or other medical conditions, are at increased risk. Call us or go to the ER if you experience any of these:

  A Abdominal pain: severe
  B Chest pain or shortness of breath
  C Headache: new, severe, unusual
  D Vision problems: loss of vision/flashings
  E Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  F Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  G Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  H Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  I Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  J Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  K Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  L Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  M Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  N Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  O Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  P Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  Q Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  R Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  S Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  T Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  U Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  V Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  W Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  X Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  Y Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling
  Z Severe pain in one leg: redness/swelling

A Final Word

If you have questions or concerns, stay on your pills and call an HQ clinician.
All about Birth Control Pills

The name of my birth control pill is:____________________________

I will take the first pill on this date:____________________________

If I have any questions, I will call my nurse at (555) 555-5555

Tips for getting started:

• **Take your pill at the same time every day.** To help you remember, set your cell phone alarm to go off every day or take your pill with something you do at the same time each day, like waking up or eating lunch.

• **Take one pill each day. Even when you start a new pack, do not skip a day.** If you do skip a day, take the pill you forgot when you take your next pill (take 2 pills at once).

• **After 7 days in a row of taking the pill, the birth control will work.** During the first seven 7 days use condoms or do not have sex. If you do have unprotected sex, take Emergency Contraception (EC) and continue taking your pill on your regular schedule.

• **Do not smoke when you are taking birth control pills.** If you are a smoker, make sure your doctor or nurse knows.

• **Ask your doctor or nurse for emergency contraception (EC) for back-up in case you miss more than one pill in a row.**

• **Some women have “side-effects”.** You may feel sick to your stomach, or have some “spotting” (very light bleeding from your vagina), or your breasts may hurt a little. These should go away once your body is used to the pill.

• **A few women can have serious reactions to birth control pills.** If you have any of these after you start your birth control pills, go to the Emergency Room (ER):
  o very bad cramps in your stomach or legs,
  o bad headaches that do not go away,
  o chest pain,
  o trouble seeing.
Fun facts about birth control:

- It can give you **shorter, lighter periods**
- It can **lessen cramps and PMS**
- It can help **clear up acne or break-outs**
- It does **not make you gain weight!**
- Antibiotics have **not** been shown to make your birth control pills stop working.

- Some types of birth control pills let you have **just four (4) periods a year**. Talk to your nurse or doctor about this.

Remember to always use condoms! Birth control pills only stop pregnancy, not sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or HIV.

Agency Logo
Agency Name

Address One
555.555.5555

Address Two
555.555.5551

Address Three
555.555.5552

Address Four
555.555.5553

If you need to speak with someone about EC call 1.800.555.5554 anytime, including weekends and holidays.
**Before & After Example #2**

**Doxycycline Prescription Information**

The original sheet detailed prescription information for Doxycycline. The sheet would be given to the client by a provider when prescribing this medication. After completing a SMOG readability assessment, the document was at a 12th grade reading level.

The revised sheet details the same information but uses easier-to-read words and format. By using questions as headings for the information, clients feel more at ease; it takes away the paternalistic tone of directions and warnings and replaces it with a conversational, caring voice. After rewriting, the SMOG readability assessment showed a 9th grade readability level. Though still a relatively high reading level, it is easier to understand for many and becomes a better tool to supplement the conversation between provider and client.
Doxycycline 100-mg tablets

Common Uses: This medicine is a tetracycline antibiotic used to treat certain bacterial infections.

How to use this Medicine: Follow the directions for using this medicine provided by your medical provider. TAKE THIS MEDICINE with a full glass (8 ounces) of water while standing or sitting upright. TAKE THIS MEDICINE with food if it upsets your stomach. Do not take vitamins, antacids, calcium, iron, magnesium, or bismuth products within 2 hours of taking this medicine. STORE THIS MEDICINE at room temperature, away from heat and light. TO CLEAR UP YOUR INFECTION COMPLETELY, continue taking this medicine for the full course of treatment even if you feel better in a few days. Do not miss any doses. IF YOU MISS A DOSE OF THIS MEDICINE, take it as soon as possible. If it is almost time for your next dose, skip the missed dose and go back to your regular dosing schedule. Do not take 2 doses at once.

Cautions: If your symptoms do not improve within a few days or if they become worse, check with your medical provider. THIS MEDICINE MAY CAUSE increased sensitivity to sunlight. Avoid exposure to the sun or sunlamps until you know how you react to this medicine. Use sunscreen or protective clothing if you much be outside for a prolonged period.

IF YOU EXPERIENCE difficulty breathing, tightness in the chest, swelling of eyelids, face, or lips, or if you develop a rash or hives, tell your medical provider immediately. Do not take any more doses of this medicine unless your medical provider tells you to do so.

USE OF THIS MEDICINE IN CHILDREN may cause permanent discoloring of the teeth. FOR WOMEN: TAKING THIS MEDICINE while using birth control pills, the effectiveness of the birth control pills may be decreased for the first two weeks while taking this medicine. Use an additional form of birth control for the first two weeks. THIS MEDICINE HAS BEEN SHOWN TO CAUSE HEARM to the human fetus (unborn baby). IF YOU PLAN ON BECOMING PREGNANT, discuss with your medical provider the benefits and risks of using this medicine during pregnancy. THIS MEDICINE IS EXCRETED IN BREAST MILK. DO NOT BREAST-FEED while taking this medicine.
Questions and Answers About Your Medicine

Name: Doxycycline 100-mg tablets
(Doks-ee-sy-kleen)

What is this medicine for?
Your doctor is giving you this medicine to treat a bacterial infection. This medicine is an antibiotic, which means it kills the germs that cause some bad coughs, skin rashes, and urinary tract infections. If you are not sure why your doctor wants you to take this medicine, call and ask your doctor.

Is there any special way I should take this medicine?
• Swallow the pills whole (do not crush them).
• When you swallow the pills, drink a glass of water (about the size of a soda can).
• For 2 hours before you take your pills or until 2 hours after you have taken your pills do not take:
  • Vitamins (multi-vitamin)
  • Antacids (Tums)
  • Calcium
  • Iron
  • Magnesium
  • Bismuth products (Pepto Bismal)

Where should I store this medicine?
• Keep this medicine in the bottle it comes in with the lid on tight.
• Keep this medicine out of the reach of children.
• Keep this medicine in a place that will not get very cold, very hot, or wet.

What should I do if the medicine upsets my stomach?
• If your stomach hurts after taking the medicine, eat a snack before taking the next dose of medicine.

What should I do if I forget to take the medicine?
• If your next planned pill-taking time is less than 2 hours away, skip the medicine that you forgot to take and keep taking the medicine as normal. Do not take both doses at the same time.
• If your next planned pill-taking time is more than 2 hours away, take the medicine you forgot about as soon as you remember. Take the next dose of medicine at the normal time you planned on taking it.
Should I keep taking the medicine even if I feel better?
- YES!!! Even though you feel better, you need to finish all the pills in the bottle to make sure the medicine kills all the germs so that you do not get sick again.

What else should I know about this medicine?
- This medicine makes some people get sunburned more easily. If you are going outside for a long time, wear sunscreen and long pants and shirts to protect your skin from the sun.

Call your doctor right away if:
- you are having a hard time breathing
- your chest hurts or feels tight
- you eyelids, face, or lips get puffy and swollen
- you notice a new rash or hives on your skin

*** If any of these things are happening call your doctor and do not take any more of this medicine.***

What if I know I’m having a baby or think I might be pregnant?
- If there is any chance you are pregnant do not take this medicine. It could hurt the unborn baby.
- Tell your doctor and he or she will give you a different kind of medicine

What if I am breastfeeding my child?
- Do not take this medicine if you are breastfeeding.
- Tell your doctor and he or she will give you a different kind of medicine.
- This medicine gets into breast milk.

What if I am on birth control pills?
- This medicine may make your birth control pills not work for two weeks after you first begin taking the medicine.
- Make sure to use another kind of birth control for those two weeks (like condoms, a diaphragm, or do not have sex).

If you still have questions about this medicine or why you are taking it, ask your nurse, doctor, or pharmacist.
Before & After Example #3

Strep Throat Care Sheet

This example is of a patient care sheet for strep throat. The revised version shows an excellent model of prioritizing information and providing only the necessary information. By reducing the amount of medical jargon and extraneous facts, the information becomes easier to understand and follow for the client.

The original document is 274 words at a 10th grade literacy level, while the revised document is 43 words at a 6th grade literacy level.
Streptococcal Pharyngitis (strep throat)

Your doctor has diagnosed you as having streptococcal pharyngitis, or “strep throat.” Strep throat is caused by Group A beta hemolytic streptococcus, a common bacteria in the nose and throat that can cause sore throats (pharyngitis) and skin infections. Symptoms of strep throat include pain and redness in the throat, difficulty swallowing, fever, and swollen glands in the neck. Sometimes there is a rash going along with the sore throat, in which case patients are said to have “scarlet fever.” Strep throat occurs most commonly in children.

The symptoms of strep throat go away by themselves, even without treatment. Without treatment, however, a small percentage of patients with strep throat will develop rheumatic fever, a serious disease of the heart and heart valves. When patients get rheumatic fever, heart valves may be damaged and in the future, the patient may need open heart surgery to replace a heart valve. Although rheumatic fever is uncommon, in recent years there have been more cases reported.

The treatment for strep throat involves taking penicillin, an antibiotic that kills the streptococcus bacteria. The reason for treating strep throat is not to make the sore throat get better quicker. Rather, the reason for treating strep throat is to prevent the development of rheumatic fever. Treatment with penicillin for 10 days almost always prevents rheumatic fever. It is important that you take the penicillin for the full 10 days, even if you are feeling better before the medicine is used up. That’s because taking the penicillin for less than 10 days may not protect you against rheumatic fever. Patients allergic to penicillin can take one of several other medications.
Treating strep throat

Take your pills two times each day (once in the morning and once in the evening). Take the medicine every day for 10 days, even if you feel better before then. Stopping the pills before 10 days can result in serious heart problems.

A Few Well-Written Plain Language Materials

The following three examples are of well-written plain language health education materials.

1. Prescription Information: *How to Take Your Invirase*
2. Brochure: *Emergency Contraception*
3. Brochure: *Choosing a Birth Control Method*
What is Invirase?

Invirase is a strong medicine that can reduce the amount of HIV in your body. Invirase fights HIV best when you take it together with one or more other anti-HIV medicines. Invirase is often used in combination with another protease inhibitor called Norvir (Ritonavir). Fortovase is a different form of this medicine that is usually taken without other protease inhibitors.

How many pills do I take? And when do I take them?

Each day, take ____ pills every ____ hours.

Take your pills at these times EVERY DAY:

- Morning
- Afternoon
- Evening

Important: To be sure there is always enough Invirase in your body to fight HIV, take your pills as close to these times as possible. And be sure to take the right number of pills each time.
If you have these or other side effects:

- Keep in mind that most side effects go away in few days or weeks.

- Call your doctor or nurse. They may have ways to relieve your side effects.

- DO NOT take fewer pills or stop taking your pills. Talk to your doctor first.

- Try the ideas in the tip sheet, "Coping with Side Effects".

Important: Some possible side effects of Invirase can only be discovered by lab tests done by a doctor or nurse. So be sure to go to all your doctor's visits.

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What are the medicines I should NOT use now that I’m taking Invirase?

Some medicines don’t mix well with Invirase. Taking Invirase when you are using these medicines could make you very sick or cause the medicines not to work.

Your doctor knows which medicines are safe to take with Invirase and which are not. Be sure you have told your doctor about ALL the medicines you are taking. This includes:

- medicines prescribed to you by a doctor
- medicines you can buy without a prescription
- herbal medicines
- street drugs
Special Instructions for taking Invirase:

■ Take your pills while you eat a meal or snack. Your body absorbs Invirase best when you have food in your stomach.

■ If your next planned pill-taking time is less than ___ hours away, DO NOT take your next dose at the planned time. Instead, wait four hours and then take your next dose.

If you forget more than one dose in a week, call your doctor or nurse to talk about what to do.

What if I forget to take my pills on time?

■ When you notice that you missed a dose, take your pills right away.

Then, for your NEXT DOSE:

■ If your next planned pill-taking time is ___ or more hours away, take your next dose at the planned time.

What should I do if I have side effects?

Some people who take Fortovase have side effects (unwanted effects of the medicine). Possible side effects include:

■ diarrhea
■ feeling sick to your stomach
Call your doctor or nurse if:

- you have questions about how to take Invirase
- you are being bothered by side effects
- you feel like stopping or taking less Invirase
- you are having trouble taking Invirase on time
- you want to start taking ANY medicine you are not now taking.

DON'T FORGET:
*You can still spread the virus.*

The anti-HIV medicines you are taking can help you stay healthier longer. But they do not cure HIV. To avoid passing HIV to others:

Practice safe sex. Don’t share needles or syringes.


This document may be reproduced for educational purposes, provided it is used in its entirety and appropriate credit is given.
ECPs are for Emergency Use Only

ECPs are not for use as regular birth control. They are not as effective as regular birth control methods.

If you are having sex, use a regular birth control method (the pill, condoms, the shot, etc.)

ECPs don’t protect you from sexually transmitted infections and AIDS. Condoms are the most effective protection against sexually transmitted infections and AIDS.

How Can I Get ECPs?

You can get ECPs from your doctor or clinic, including community clinics or health department clinics.

Call and tell them you need Emergency Contraceptive Pills.

If you’re not sure where to go, call the:

Emergency Contraception Hotline
1-888-668-2528
(1-888-NOT-2-LATE)

English and Spanish are spoken.

The automated hotline is free, confidential and open 24 hours a day. It will tell you where you can go for help.

You can also get more information on the:

World Wide Web
http://opr.princeton.edu/ec/

path
PATH is a nonprofit, international organization with headquarters in Seattle, Washington. PATH's mission is to improve health, especially the health of women and children.

This project is supported by the John Merck Fund; the Horizons Foundation; the U.S. Public Health Service, Region X; and the Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.
Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECPs)

What are Emergency Contraceptive Pills (ECPs)?

Pregnancy by 75%.
They reduce your chance of getting
3 days after sex to prevent pregnancy.
They are taken in special doses within
ECPs are only used by control pills.

Are There Side Effects?

24 hours a day.
Contraception without, free, confidential,
For information, call the Emergency
Pregnant, ECPs are not abortion pills.
ECPs will not work if you are already
attaching to the womb.
- Stopping a fertilized egg from
- Stopping fertilization or
- Releasing of
- Temporarily stopping eggs from being

ECPs help prevent pregnancy by:

How Do ECPs Work?

Ask your medical provider for details.
Within 5 days after sex.
G. IUD (Intrauterine device) inserted
of
ECPs used within 3 days after sex.
Known as ECPs or morning after
emergency contraception.

Emergancy contraception:
There are two main methods of
prevent pregnant after sex:
Emergency contraception is a way to
- You were forced to have sex
- Pil in a row or started your birth control
- You missed two or more birth control
- You were late for your birth control
- You didn’t use birth control
- You use contraception if you had sex in the least

Are They Safe?

Talk to your medical provider to learn
after unprotected sex.
Greatly reduce the chance of pregnancy.
has stated that ECPs are safe. They can
The U.S. Food and Drug Administration

Don’t wait!

Fear You’re Pregnant?
**EMERGENCY BIRTH CONTROL**

Emergency birth control can prevent pregnancy after sex, but only if you use it as soon as possible—within a couple of days. If you had unprotected sex (sex without using birth control), were forced to have sex, or think your birth control method didn’t work, you may be able to use one of these methods to prevent pregnancy.

Emergency Contraceptive (EC) Pills (for women): EC pills are a high dose of birth control pills that work best to prevent pregnancy when you take them within the first 12 hours after unprotected sex. Most health care providers will give you EC pills up to 3 days (72 hours) after unprotected sex. Others will give them to you up to 5 days (120 hours) after. Some providers will give you EC pills now if you think you will need them in the future. Don’t wait! Take EC pills as soon as possible after unprotected sex.

You can get EC pills with a prescription from your doctor or clinic, or from the pharmacist at some drug stores, without seeing a doctor first. For more information about where to get EC, call your health care provider or family planning clinic, ask your pharmacist, or call 1-888-NOT-2-LATE (www.not-2-late.com).

**BIRTH CONTROL AFTER HAVING A BABY**

If you have just had a baby or are breastfeeding now, ask your doctor or nurse about which types of birth control you can use so that you don’t get pregnant again until you want to.

**MASSACHUSETTS FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAMS PROVIDE THESE SERVICES:**
- Birth control information and supplies
- Breast exams, Pap smears and other medical exams
- Pregnancy testing and counseling
- Testing and treatment for STDs
- Information, counseling and testing for HIV

Massachusetts family planning services are confidential and private for all clients, including teens. You may be able to get services at low cost or no cost to you.

**GREATER BOSTON**

ABCD/Boston Family Planning  
617-357-6000 ext. 6251

CEOC Cambridge Family Planning  
617-868-2900

CHA Somerville Family Planning  
617-591-6735

Planned Parenthood League of MA  
(Boston, Somerville Express Center)  
617-616-1600 or 1-800-258-4448

**CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS**

Great Brook Valley Health Center  
(Worcester) 508-852-1805

Health Awareness Services of Central MA  
(Worcester) 508-753-0800  
(Marlboro, Milford, Southbridge) 1-800-637-5466

Planned Parenthood League of MA  
(Worcester) 508-854-3300 or 1-800-258-4448

ProHealth  
(Fitchburg) 978-345-6272, (Gardner) 978-632-9633

Tapestry Health Systems  
(Athol) 413-586-2016 or 1-800-696-7752

**NORTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS**

Health Quarters  
(Beverly, Lynn, Haverhill, Reading, Lawrence) 978-927-9824 or 1-800-892-0234

Women’s Services of Greater Lowell  
978-446-0236

**SOUTHEASTERN MASSACHUSETTS**

Citizens for Citizens Family Planning  
(Fall River) 508-679-0198  
(Taunton) 508-823-6924

Health Care of Southeastern MA, Inc.  
(Attleboro, Brockton, Falmouth, Hull, Hyannis, Martha’s Vineyard, Nantucket, New Bedford, Plymouth, Providence, Wareham) 508-583-3005

**WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS**

Planned Parenthood League of MA  
(Springfield) 413-739-1620 or 1-800-258-4448

Tapestry Health Systems  
(Amherst, Great Barrington, Greenfield, Holyoke, North Adams, Northampton, Pittsfield, Springfield, Westfield) 413-586-2016 or 1-800-696-7752

To find a family planning program near you call:
- 617-624-6060 (Greater Boston area)
- 877-414-4447 (all other areas of the state) or go to our website: www.mass.gov/dph/fch/famplan.htm

To find other counseling programs and services near you, call:
- Rape Crisis Hotline: 1-800-841-8371 (English) 1-800-223-5001 (Spanish)
For some people, not having sex is the best way to prevent a pregnancy. Practiced correctly, abstinence is very effective at preventing pregnancy, HIV and other STDs.

Natural Family Planning (for women and men): track of the monthly changes in your menstrual cycle, so that you can understand which days you are most likely to get pregnant. By using a barrier method of birth control or not having sex on the days when you are most likely to get pregnant.

PERMANENT METHODS

These methods last for the rest of your life. They are for people who are sure they will never want to have children in the future.

- Vasectomy (for men): Vasectomy is an operation done by a doctor. The man’s tubes that carry sperm are cut or blocked so that sperm is not released when the man ejaculates (cums) during sex.

- “The Shot” or “Depo” (for women): A doctor or nurse gives you a shot (injection) of a hormone to prevent pregnancy for 3 months. You must get a shot every three months for this method to keep working.

- “The Patch” (for women): The patch contains hormones that prevent pregnancy. You stick a patch to your skin and change it once a week for 3 weeks. The 4th week you do not use a patch and your period will start. At the end of the 4th week, you put on a new patch, and start the process over again. A doctor or nurse must give you a prescription.

- Vaginal Ring (for women): A flexible ring contains hormones that prevent pregnancy. You put it into your vagina and leave it in for 3 weeks. On the 4th week you take out the ring and your period will start. At the end of the 4th week, you put in a new ring, and start the process over again. A doctor or nurse must give you a prescription.

- IUD (for women): IUD stands for intrauterine device. An IUD is a small device made of plastic that is put inside a woman’s uterus by a doctor or nurse. There are two types of IUDs. One contains copper and the other contains a hormone to prevent pregnancy. An IUD may be left in place for 5-10 years, depending on the type.

Partners must be able to talk to each other and work together for these methods to work best.

To Prevent HIV and Other STDs, Use a Condom

Latex or plastic condoms are the only kinds in preventing HIV and other STDs. If you use other forms of birth control but also want protection against HIV and other STDs, use a condom in addition to the birth control method you are using.