

METHOD	What is it?	How effective?	Advantages	Disadvantages	How do I get it?	Cost
Hormonal IUD (Mirena, Kyleena & Jaydess)	A small plastic, T-shaped device that is inserted into the uterus by a doctor. Can remain in place for up to 5 years (Jaydess up to 3 years). Thickens cervical mucus making it difficult for sperm to reach the egg.	Mirena 99.9% Jaydess 99.1%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly effective Long-acting Easy to use Completely reversible, can be removed at any time Lower dose of hormones than other hormonal methods Lighter periods, may stop periods Suitable for women who cannot take estrogen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can be expensive Often irregular bleeding in first few months of use May occasionally cause side effects such as headaches, mood changes, or slight weight gain Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections 	Prescription (Must be inserted by a doctor. You can book an IUD insertion at Woman's Health Options)	Mirena & Kyleena \$350 - \$500 Jaydess \$250 - \$350 (Note: Most benefit plans including First Nations and Inuit Health, Alberta Works, and AISH will cover all or part of this cost)
Vasectomy (Male)	A permanent surgical procedure available to men to close or block the vas deferens (the tubes that carry sperm to the penis). Performed in a doctor's office with local anaesthetic.	99.9%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly effective No cost No contraception routine required Does not interfere with intercourse Less invasive and fewer complications than female sterilization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent Is not effective until about 20 ejaculations after procedure; must return for a follow-up appointment to confirm it was successful Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections 	Medical procedure (Must speak with your doctor)	All costs covered by Alberta Health
Essure	A permanent medical procedure to insert coils into the fallopian tubes. After insertion the body works with the coil to build up a tissue barrier in the tube. Performed in a clinic using conscious sedation.	99.7%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Highly effective No contraception routine required More safe than surgical sterilization Most women return to normal activities in a day or two 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Permanent Possible short-term complications: abdominal discomfort, chance of infection, reaction to the sedation medications Takes at least three months to take effect, must return for follow up appointment to confirm it has been effective Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections Expensive (This procedure is currently not covered by Alberta Health, though it may be in the future) 	Medical procedure (Must book a consultation appointment with a doctor at Woman's Health Options)	\$2200

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Tubal ligation	A permanent surgical procedure to close or block the fallopian tubes. Performed in a hospital under general anaesthetic.	99.5%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly effective • No cost • No contraception routine required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permanent • Possible short-term complications: abdominal discomfort, chance of infection, reaction to the anaesthetic • May require one week recovery (longer recovery than vasectomy or Essure) • Failure rates depend on the type of procedure • Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections 	Surgical procedure (Must speak with your doctor, or book a consultation appointment with a doctor at Woman's Health Options)	All costs covered by Alberta Health
Non-Hormonal IUD	A small T-shaped device that is inserted into the uterus by a doctor. Can remain in place for up to 5 years. Changes uterine environment to prevent fertilization.	99.1%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly effective • Long-acting • Easy to use • Completely reversible, can be removed at any time • No hormones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May cause more painful or heavier periods • Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections 	Prescription (Must be inserted by a doctor. You can book an IUD insertion at Woman's Health Options)	\$50 - \$150
Depo-Provera Injection	A hormonal injection containing progestin given at a pharmacy. Each injection lasts for 12 weeks. Added hormones stop ovulation and increase cervical mucus making it difficult for the sperm to reach the egg.	97%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly effective • Easy to use • May stop a woman's period • Suitable for women who cannot take estrogen such as women who are breastfeeding, or who are over 35 and smoke. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May cause side effects such as headaches, mood changes, weight gain, or irregular bleeding. • May stop a woman's period (some women do not like this) • May cause bone mineral density loss (weaken bones) therefore required to take a vitamin D and calcium supplement on a daily basis • Some doctors may suggest limiting use to two years • May take up to 9 months for ovulation to return after last injection • Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections 	Prescription	\$30 - \$50 per injection (Can be injected by a doctor or pharmacist)

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Birth Control Pill	A pill containing progestin and estrogen is taken every day, and at the same time each day. Works primarily by stopping ovulation and increasing cervical mucus making it difficult for the sperm to reach the egg. Variety of brands and doses available.	92%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very effective • Can regulate periods, lessen bleeding, and decrease period cramping • May decrease acne 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be taken every day and at the exact same time every day in order to be effective • May cause side effects such as nausea, headaches, mood changes, or slight weight gain • May increase risk of blood clots in some women • Effectiveness may be reduced by use of other medications • Not recommended for women who are breastfeeding, or for women who are over the age of 35 and smoke • Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections • Some brands may not be effective for women who weigh more than 175lbs 	Prescription	\$15 - \$30 per month
Evra Patch	A patch containing progestin and estrogen that is worn on the skin. Each patch is worn for a week at a time and releases a daily dose of hormones. Works primarily by stopping ovulation and increasing cervical mucus making it difficult for the sperm to reach the egg.	92%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very effective • Can regulate periods, lessen bleeding, and decrease period cramping • Many women find it easier to use than the birth control pill because you only have to remember to change the patch once per week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May cause side effects such as nausea, headaches, mood changes, or slight weight gain • May increase risk of blood clots in some women • May irritate the skin • Effectiveness may be reduced by use of other medications • Not recommended for women who are breastfeeding, or for women who are over the age of 35 and smoke • Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections • May not be suitable for women over 175lbs. 	Prescription	\$15 - \$30 per month
NuvaRing	A flexible plastic ring containing progestin and estrogen that a woman inserts into her vagina. The ring remains in the vagina for 3 weeks and releases a daily dose of hormones. Works primarily by stopping ovulation and increasing cervical mucus making it difficult for the sperm to reach the egg.	92%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very effective • Can regulate the periods and decrease period cramping • Many women find it easier to use than the birth control pill because you only have to remember to change the ring once a month. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May cause side effects such as nausea, headaches, mood changes, or slight weight gain • May increase risk of blood clots in some women • May cause vaginal irritation • Some women are not comfortable inserting it on their own • Effectiveness may be reduced by use of other medications • Not recommended for women who are breastfeeding, or for women who are over the age of 35 and smoke • Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections 	Prescription	\$15 - \$30 per month

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Micronor "Mini-pill"	A pill containing progestin only is taken every day, and at the same time each day. Added hormones stop ovulation and increase cervical mucus making it difficult for the sperm to reach the egg.	90%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitable for women who cannot take estrogen such as women who are breastfeeding, or who are over 35 and smoke. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not as effective as the combination birth-control pill Must be taken every day and at the same time every day in order to be effective May cause side effects such as nausea, headaches, mood changes, or slight weight gain Effectiveness may be reduced by use of other medications Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections May not be suitable for women over 175lbs. 	Prescription	\$15 - \$30 per month
Male Condoms	A thin latex cover for the penis. Acts a physical barrier between the penis and vagina. Must be put on before any genital contact.	85% (With typical use)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inexpensive Easy to buy Prevents against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) No hormones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be available at time of intercourse Requires consistent use May interrupt spontaneity May break during use Some types may decrease sensation Must be stored in a cool, dark place 	Can be purchased at any pharmacy or grocery store	Approx \$1/each
Diaphragm or Cervical Cap	A dome-shaped cap that is positioned in the vagina and over the cervix prior to intercourse. Blocks sperm from entering the uterus. Spermicide should also be used.	Diaphragm 84% FemCap 68%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reusable Is small, and can be carried around and inserted a few hours before intercourse No hormones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Often requires special fitting Requires consistent use Difficult to insert or remove Must be left in for at least 8 hours after intercourse Spermicide can cause irritation Long term use of spermicide can increase the risk of HIV and STI transmission 	Diaphragms and cervical caps are not widely available in Canada. Must be fitted by a doctor	\$90-\$150
Today Sponge	A soft, disposable sponge that is positioned in the vagina prior to intercourse. Blocks sperm from entering the uterus. Spermicide in sponge impairs sperm.	60-80%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inexpensive Easy to buy Does not require special fitting Is small, and can be carried around and inserted a few hours before intercourse No hormones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be available at time of intercourse Requires consistent use Difficult to insert or remove Spermicide can cause irritation Must be left in for at least 6 hours after intercourse Long term use of spermicide can increase the risk of HIV and STI transmission 	Can be purchased at most pharmacies	\$10 - \$15 for pack of three
Female Condoms	A thin polyurethane sheath that is placed inside the vagina. Acts as a physical barrier between the penis and vagina. Must be inserted before any genital contact.	79% (With typical use)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prevents against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) No hormones Latex free 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must be available at time of intercourse Requires consistent use May interrupt spontaneity May break during use May decrease sensation 	Can be purchased at most pharmacies or grocery stores	Approx. \$3/each

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Fertility Awareness/Calendar method	Involves a woman tracking periods, taking temperature daily, and noting vaginal discharge as a means to identify her fertile period (the days she is most at-risk of getting pregnant) each month.	76% (With typical use)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No cost • No hormones • Increased body awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires commitment, daily monitoring, and diligent tracking • Menstrual cycle must be tracked for several months prior to use to ensure it is consistent • Abstinence or condoms must be used during fertile period of 7-10 days each month • Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections 	Information available online at www.justisse.ca and other websites	No cost
The "morning after pill" or Plan B	Pill can be used after unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy. The sooner after sex it is taken, the more effective it will be. Contains a high dose of the same hormones that are in the birth control pill.	75% - 89%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Useful to use as a back-up if condom broke or birth control pill was missed • Easy to buy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be expensive • May cause nausea, vomiting, breast tenderness, and diarrhea • May increase risk of blood clots in some women • Does not protect you for the rest of your menstrual cycle • Not designed for frequent or regular use • This medication is less effective for women who weigh more than 165lbs. 	Can be purchased at any pharmacy. You do not need a prescription.	\$30 - \$50 for each dose
Withdrawal Method "Pulling Out"	During intercourse, a man must remove his penis from the woman's vagina prior to ejaculation	73%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be used when no other options are available • No cost • No hormones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not very effective • Pre-ejaculation is common (small amount of semen being released throughout intercourse) and can cause pregnancy • May not withdraw in time • Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections 		No cost
Vaginal spermicide (used alone)	Products containing an ingredient that kills sperm on contact. Must be inserted into the vaginal prior to intercourse. Comes in different forms; gel, film, foam, or cream.	71%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inexpensive • Easy to buy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be available at time of intercourse • Requires consistent use • Can be messy • Spermicide can cause irritation • Long term use of spermicide can increase the risk of HIV and STI transmission 	Can be purchased at any pharmacy or grocery store	Approx. \$1 per use
Abstinence	For some it can mean no sexual contact. For others it is no sexual intercourse or vaginal penetration.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highly effective • No cost • No side effects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be difficult to abstain for long periods of time • Engaging in other sexual activities wherein sperm is close to the vaginal opening can cause pregnancy 		No cost

Birth Control Options

A Comprehensive
Comparison Chart