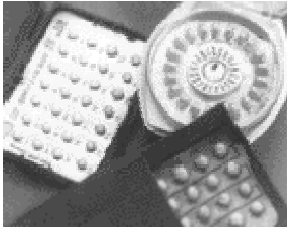




Combined hormone methods include:

- The Pill
- The Ring
- The Patch

If you choose the Pill (combined hormone pill):



Your clinician will prescribe the right pill for you. Take one each day. Complete one pill-pack each month.

The Pill uses hormones similar to the estrogen and progesterone made by a woman's ovaries to:

- Usually, prevent the ovaries from releasing an egg (ovulation).
- Also thicken cervical mucus to prevent sperm from joining egg.

92–99.7% effective

Not effective against sexually transmitted infections — use latex or female condoms to reduce the risk.

Cost

- \$15 to \$35 per monthly pill-pack at drugstores—often less at clinics
- \$35 to \$125 for an exam

Some family planning clinics charge according to income. Costs vary from community to community, based on regional and local expenses.

Advantages of the Pill

- Nothing to put in place before intercourse.
- More regular, shorter periods.
- Less: menstrual flow and cramping, acne, iron deficiency anemia, excess body hair, premenstrual symptoms (such as related headaches and depression) and vaginal dryness and painful intercourse associated with menopause.
- Reduces the risk of ovarian and endometrial cancers, pelvic inflammatory disease, non-cancerous growths of the breasts, ovarian cysts, and osteoporosis (thinning of the bones).
- Fewer occurrences of ectopic pregnancy (in a fallopian tube).
- Ability to become pregnant returns quickly when use is stopped

Possible Disadvantages of the Pill

- Must be taken daily.
- Rare but serious health risks, including blood clots, heart attack, and stroke—women who are 35 and older and smoke are at a greater risk.
- Other side effects include temporary irregular bleeding, weight gain or loss, breast tenderness, nausea—rarely, vomiting, changes in mood, and other discomforts.

Persistent side effects may be relieved by having your clinician change your prescription.



If you choose the Ring (NuvaRing):



You will insert a small, flexible ring deep into the vagina for three weeks and take it out for the fourth week. It releases combined hormones that protect against pregnancy for one month.

The Ring uses hormones similar to the estrogen and progesterone made by a woman's ovaries to:

- Usually, prevent the ovaries from releasing an egg (ovulation).
- Also thicken cervical mucus to prevent sperm from joining egg.

Up to 99.7% Effective

Not effective against sexually transmitted infections—use latex or female condoms to reduce the risk.

Cost

- \$30 to \$35 for a month's supply of rings
- \$35 to \$125 for an exam

Some family planning clinics charge according to income. Costs vary from community to community, based on regional and local expenses.

Advantages of the Ring

- Protects against pregnancy for one month.
- No pill to take daily.
- Does not require a "fitting" by a clinician.
- Does not require the use of spermicide.
- Ability to become pregnant returns quickly when use is stopped.
- Nothing to put in place before intercourse.

Results of long-term studies won't be available for some time, but researchers assume that the non-contraceptive advantages associated with using the Ring are similar to those known to be associated with the Pill.

Possible Disadvantages of the Ring

- Increased vaginal discharge.
- Vaginal irritation or infection.
- Cannot use a diaphragm, cap, or shield for a backup method of birth control.
- Rare but serious health risks, including blood clots, heart attack, and stroke—women who are 35 and older and smoke are at a greater risk.
- Other side effects include temporary irregular bleeding, weight gain or loss, breast tenderness, nausea—rarely, vomiting, changes in mood, and other discomforts.



If You Choose the Patch (Ortho Evra):



You will place a thin plastic patch on the skin of the buttocks, stomach, upper outer arm, or upper torso once a week for three weeks in a row. Use a new patch each week. Do not use a patch for the fourth week. The Patch releases combined hormones that protect against pregnancy for one month.

The Patch uses hormones similar to the estrogen and progesterone made by a woman's ovaries to

- Usually, prevent the ovaries from releasing an egg (ovulation).
- Also thicken cervical mucus to prevent sperm from joining egg.

Up to 99.7% Effective

Not effective against sexually transmitted infections—use latex or female condoms to reduce the risk.

Cost

- \$30 to \$35 for a month's supply of patches
- \$35 to \$125 for an exam

Some family planning clinics charge according to income. Costs vary from community to community, based on regional and local expenses.

Advantages of the Patch

- Protects against pregnancy for one month.
- No pill to take daily.
- Ability to become pregnant returns quickly when use is stopped.
- Nothing to put in place before intercourse.

Results of long-term studies won't be available for some time, but researchers assume that the non-contraceptive advantages associated with using the Patch are similar to those known to be associated with the Pill.

Possible Disadvantages of the Patch

- Skin reaction at the site of application.
- Menstrual cramps.
- May not be as effective for women who weigh more than 198 pounds.
- Rare but serious health risks, including blood clots, heart attack, and stroke—women who are 35 and older and smoke are at a greater risk.
- Other side effects include temporary irregular bleeding, weight gain or loss, breast tenderness, nausea—rarely, vomiting, changes in mood, and other discomforts.