



Talk Contraception

**Enabling meaningful conversations
with your healthcare professional**

Raising the subject of contraception with your healthcare professional can sometimes feel a little embarrassing – or you may simply not know what to ask or where to start.

Remember, your healthcare professional is there to guide, support and ensure you are prescribed the best option for you. This discussion aid has been developed in collaboration with GP Stephanie Cook and is designed to help you prepare for your consultations effectively, provide some guidance on how best to communicate your needs, and help you ask the right questions to ensure you walk out of your consultation feeling confident in the contraceptive option that has been prescribed for you!

There are around fifteen forms of contraception available in the UK. Understanding your options and knowing what to ask your healthcare professional will help you get the information you need during your consultation and ensure you are prescribed the contraceptive method that is most suitable for you and your lifestyle.

This guide sets out some points for you to consider before your appointment, provides some guidance around potential questions that you may want to ask your healthcare professional and some tips to keep in mind after your visit.

Before your appointment

Choosing a contraceptive method that is most suitable for you will be based on a number of factors, including your health, your lifestyle – and whether you intend to start a family in the near future.

A few pointers to consider before you meet your healthcare professional

1

If you feel that you would like to start a family at some point, how soon in the future do you think that might be?

2

Which methods of contraception do you think you would prefer? Which aspects of using a contraceptive method do you think you might find difficult?

3

Do you suffer with heavy or painful periods? Or how would you feel if your periods were to change? Contraception can influence your periods making them lighter, heavier, irregular, or even stop all together.

Having some key information to hand about your medical history before you go into your consultation will help move the conversation along quicker and give you more time to discuss the contraceptive options that you and your healthcare professional decide might be best for you.

Go into your appointment with the following information to hand to ensure you have the answers ready to provide your healthcare professional at the beginning of your consultations.

- Your height
- Your weight
- Your blood pressure
- Your medical history and any relevant family medical history
- Any medication you take – including any current contraception (you can take along pictures of the boxes for easy reference)
- Do you suffer from frequent headaches or migraine?
- In order to understand your possible risk of, for example, STIs, details of when you last had a change in sexual partner.
- In order to assess wider health considerations, details of whether you smoke or vape.

At your appointment

- 1** Tell your healthcare professional why you requested the appointment and what contraception you initially think would be most suited to you.
- 2** Ask your healthcare professional if your chosen contraception is suitable for you given your medical history and personal profile.
- 3** If you have any concerns about your chosen contraceptive method, share them with your healthcare professional.
- 4** If you are exploring a contraceptive method, ask your healthcare professional what you should do in the event you feel you may not have used it correctly or have forgotten to take it.
- 5** Should you have any questions about your current contraceptive method, speak to your healthcare professional.

It is important to find a contraceptive method which fits in with your lifestyle and future plans. Depending on your own personal circumstances, you may also want to consider asking your healthcare professional some of the following questions to ensure that your chosen contraceptive method is suitable for you

The Basics

- What choices are there and what are the differences?
- Might the contraception affect my moods / weight / skin / periods?

Your Life

- Is there anything in my medical or family history that I need to consider with choosing my contraception?
- Do any of my current medications impact my contraception choices?

Family considerations and family planning

- How soon after starting this contraception will I be protected from pregnancy?
- My partner and I want to start a family in the next year. which contraception is more suitable?
- What are my contraception choices while breastfeeding?

You need to be comfortable and happy with the method you choose to ensure you receive the contraception that suits you and your body and gives you the level of birth control you require.

No contraception delivers 100% pregnancy prevention.

Next steps

It is important to follow up on your contraception as guided by your healthcare professional. And once you have started with your contraceptive method it is important to monitor it to make sure you feel it is suited to you and your lifestyle.

Track your symptoms

It can take a little time for your body to get used to a new contraceptive and you may experience side effects when you begin.

If you have any concerns, speak to your healthcare professional.

Stopping use of your contraceptive could put you at risk of unplanned pregnancy. Keep a record of what you are experiencing and when, and speak to your Healthcare Professional to discuss what other options are available if you both agree you might be better suited to another method.

Reporting of side effects: If you get any side effects, talk to your doctor, pharmacist or nurse. This includes any possible side effects not listed in the package leaflet. You can also report side effects directly via the Yellow Card scheme at <https://yellowcard.mhra.gov.uk>

By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of this medicine.