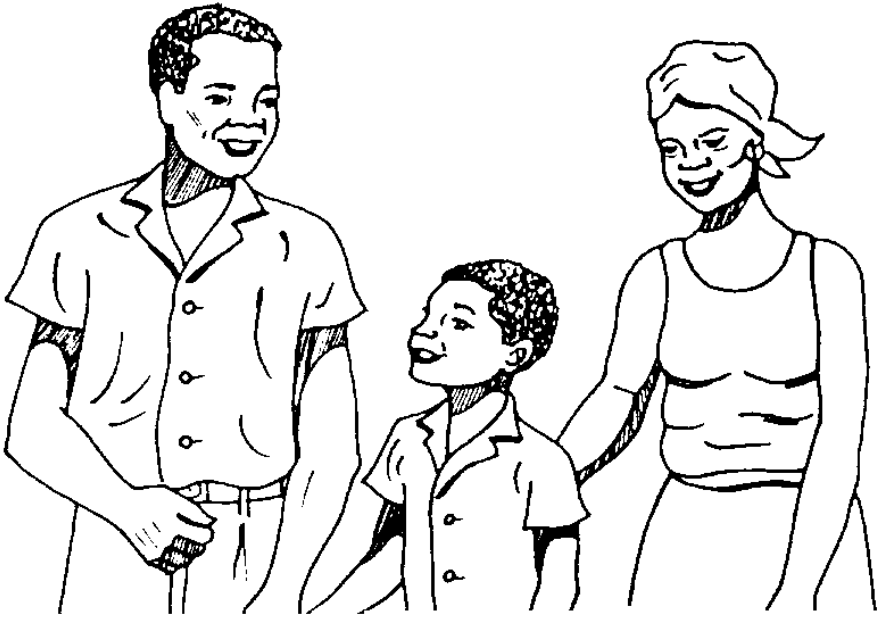


How Family Planning Methods Work



USAID
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"Health in Totality"



CCIH
Christian Connections
for International Health



**ADVANCING PARTNERS
& COMMUNITIES**

English

How Family Planning Methods Work

English
Kenya



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Introduction

What is family planning?

Family planning is when people decide for themselves the number of children they want to have and how long to wait before becoming pregnant again. Family planning involves people using methods to prevent pregnancy, but it does not include abortion. Family planning should always be voluntary, that is, no one should tell people they must use family planning or which method they must use. The methods they choose should be consistent with what they value and believe.

In some areas family planning is called 'healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies' (HTSP). This is because it helps you choose when to get pregnant and know how to avoid pregnancy if you do not wish to get pregnant.

Why is family planning important?

Planning how many children you want to have and when to have them benefits your baby, mother, and family. When a pregnancy is planned, a baby is more likely to be born healthy, to breastfeed for a longer time and grow well. A mother is able to regain her strength before getting pregnant again. Also, she will have more time for the baby and to care for her family. The family will have more resources for food, clothing, housing and education.

Mothers and babies will be more healthy if women (and girls) wait until they are 18 years old to get pregnant and have their children before age 35. They should wait 2 years after a birth/delivering a baby before trying to get pregnant again. Child deaths and stunting are lower when a woman waits at least two years after giving birth before trying to get pregnant again. It is also best to wait 6 months after a miscarriage or abortion to get pregnant again. Adequate birth spacing improves mothers' and children's health.

What this book is about

This book provides simple information on 12 methods for healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies, how each method works and what you can expect. Think carefully about the information concerning each method and talk to your spouse/partner about it if possible.

Multiple family planning options are important so a woman can choose the one that works best for her body and at this point in her life. For example, she should consider if she wants to space her pregnancies or if she is done having children. A woman can begin using a different method in consultation with her health provider if she is reasonably sure she is not pregnant. This is true even if she is already using another method. Each method has advantages and disadvantages, so talk to a health worker to get advice on which method might be best for you. This is particularly important if either of you is HIV positive.

Effectiveness

All of the methods discussed in this book will help you avoid becoming pregnant, but some methods do a better job of that than others. You should choose the one that is best for you. The most effective methods are:

IUD, Tubal Ligation, Vasectomy

It would be very rare for someone using these methods to get pregnant.

The following methods are not quite as effective as the ones listed above:

Injectables, Breastfeeding Method, Pills

Sometimes women using these methods still get pregnant, but it doesn't happen very often *if used correctly*.

The following methods are less effective than all those listed above:

Male condom, Female condom

Moon Beads or CycleBeads®, TwoDay Method®

These methods have to be used very carefully to prevent you from becoming pregnant.

If used consistently and correctly, it is generally not necessary to use a second method. If you feel you are at risk of a sexually transmitted infection (STI), including HIV, you should use a condom (male or female) to help protect against STIs.

Remember: You can choose the method that suits you.

What the Bible says

Healthy timing and spacing of pregnancies (HTSP), or family planning as it is commonly known, is one way of showing care for the mother and therefore the whole family. When mother or child is suffering, the whole family will suffer. “If one part suffers, every part suffers with it.” 1 Corinthians 12:26a. Therefore, caring for one person in the family means we are actually showing care for the whole family and the entire body of Christ.

God expects us to be responsible for taking care of our families. That means that the number of children we plan to have should be that which we can care for, provide for and educate. “Anyone who does not provide for their relatives, and especially their own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” 1 Timothy 5:8

“God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.'” Genesis 1:28 This does not mean that each couple is responsible for filling the earth with children. It is a collective responsibility. God commanded Adam and Eve to take charge of His creation responsibly. One way of exercising this responsibility in family life is to use HTSP (healthy timing and spacing) for the benefit and health of the mother, the baby and the whole family.

Note that family planning is also valued within Islam and other religions.

Breastfeeding Method

How it works

The Breastfeeding Method, also known as Lactational Amenorrhea Method (LAM), prevents pregnancy if you feed your baby entirely on breast milk, you breastfeed your baby regularly, day and night, and if you meet ALL 3 of these conditions (see the illustrations on the next page):

1. You have had no menstrual bleeding since your baby was born.
2. You feed your baby only on breast milk and do not give the baby any other food or liquid.
3. Your baby is less than 6 months old.

LAM works because breastfeeding temporarily prevents a woman's body from releasing an egg.

What to expect

Women can expect no monthly bleeding while breastfeeding. This can go on for several months after having a baby. A woman can use breastfeeding for family planning up to 6 months after she gives birth. She should plan on starting another method if she has menstrual bleeding, gives her baby any other food or liquid, or her baby is more than 6 months old.

Breastfeeding Method

1



2



3



Pill

How it works

The woman takes a pill every day. The pill stops the woman from producing an egg, so even if sperm are in her reproductive system, there is no egg to fertilize.

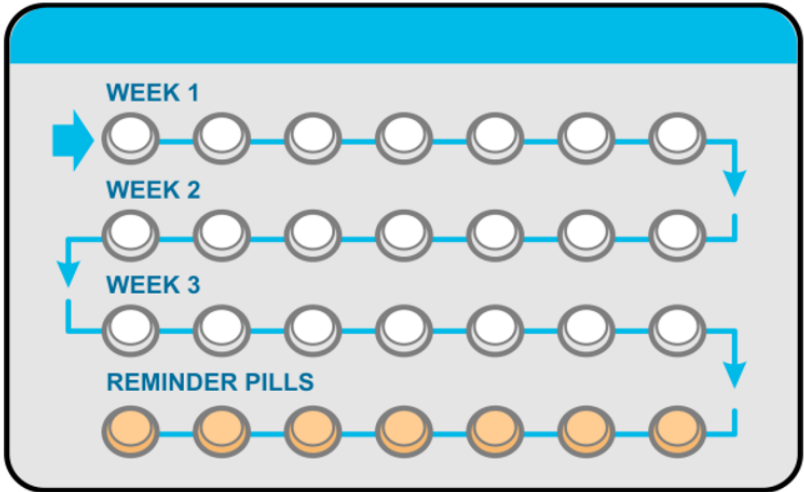
The standard pill is used for women who are not breastfeeding. There is another type of pill that can be used during breastfeeding.

What to expect

1. Some women experience irregular bleeding with some cramping at first, which is normal, safe and common.
2. Some women experience stomach upset or mild headaches that go away after the first few months.

You must remember to take the pill at the same time every day. If you forget a pill, you should take it as soon as you remember. You can take up to 2 pills in 1 day or at the same time.

Pill



Injectable

How it works

An “injectable” is a hormone that is injected into the woman to prevent the release of an egg and is highly effective. After the first injection, the woman will need to have another injection every 3 months. In some places, both one month and two month injections may be available.

What to expect

A woman must get an injection every 3 months.

She may experience:

1. Irregular bleeding at first, then spotting or no monthly bleeding, but this is common and safe; and
2. Possible slight weight change.

Note: After stopping injections, it can take several months to become pregnant.

Injectable



Implant

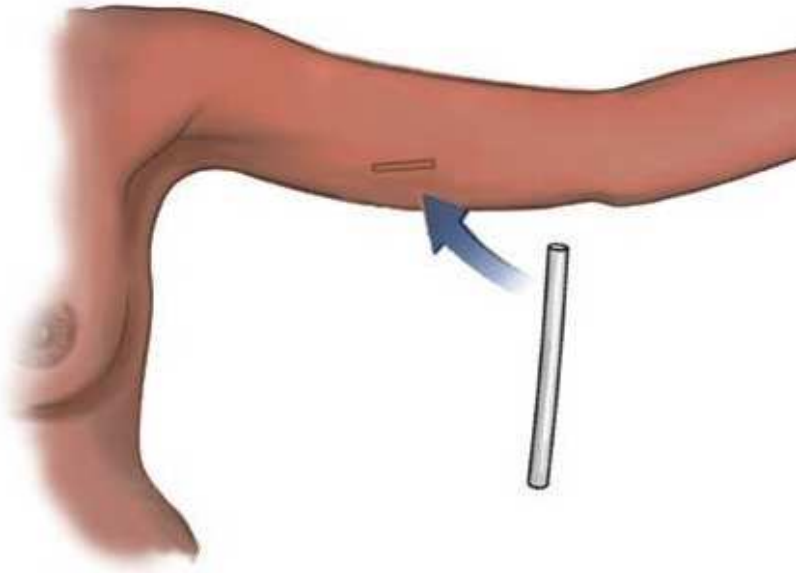
How it works

A health worker inserts a small capsule under the skin of the inner, upper arm using an implant. This protects a woman from getting pregnant for 3 to 5 years, depending on the type of implant. An implant works by preventing sperm from reaching the egg and by preventing the release of the egg. It can be removed at any time when you want to get pregnant.

What to expect

Irregular bleeding, spotting, heavier bleeding or no monthly bleeding may occur; this is normal, safe and common.

Implant



Moon Beads or CycleBeads®

How it works

A woman uses a set of strung coloured beads known as Moon Beads to help her know the days of the month on which she is fertile and therefore more likely to get pregnant. Moon Beads can be used by most women who have regular menstrual cycles between 26 and 32 days long.

To prevent a pregnancy, the couple either uses condoms or abstains from sex on the woman's fertile (white beads) days.

What to expect

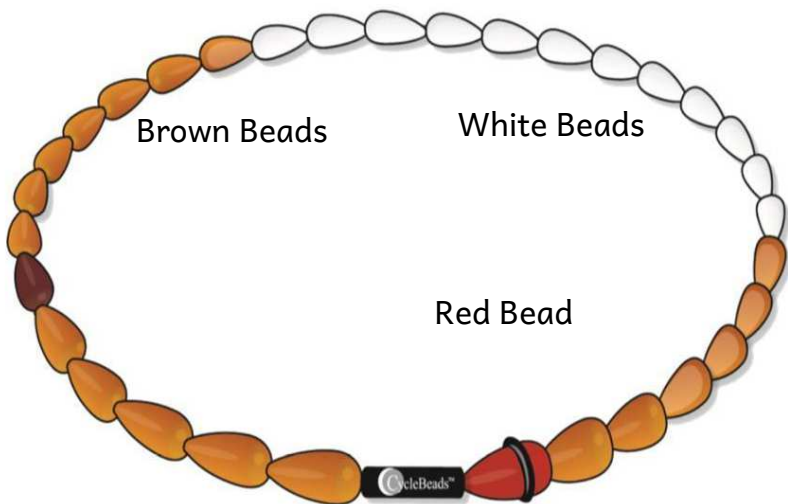
Using Moon Beads has no side effects. On fertile days couples must use condoms or abstain from sex to avoid a pregnancy.

Moon Beads or CycleBeads®

Brown beads:

White beads:

Pregnancy is very unlikely Pregnancy is most likely



**Dark brown
bead:**

Red bead:

Tells you if your cycle is shorter than 26 days

First day of your period, when you start to move the **rubber ring** from bead to bead daily

TwoDay Method®

How it works

A woman checks for secretions daily. If she has secretions today and yesterday she is considered fertile and likely to get pregnant today. She is not fertile when she has two consecutive days without secretions. To prevent pregnancy, couples use condoms or abstain from sex on fertile days.

What to expect

The TwoDay Method has no side effects. Couples must agree and be able to use condoms or abstain from sex on fertile days to avoid a pregnancy.

TwoDay Method®

This illustration shows a woman who has checked for secretions and has some on her two fingers.



Male Condom

How it works

A male condom covers the man's penis during sex and stops the sperm from entering the woman's reproductive system. It also helps protect from sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS.

What to expect

It is important to use the condom correctly and consistently every time you have sex.

Male Condom



Female Condom

How it works

A female condom is placed inside the woman's vagina to stop sperm from entering her reproductive system. It also helps protect from sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS.

What to expect

It is important to use the condom correctly and consistently every time you have sex.

Note: Make sure the penis enters inside the condom ring and stays in all through the course of having sex.

Female Condom



IUD - Intra-Uterine Device

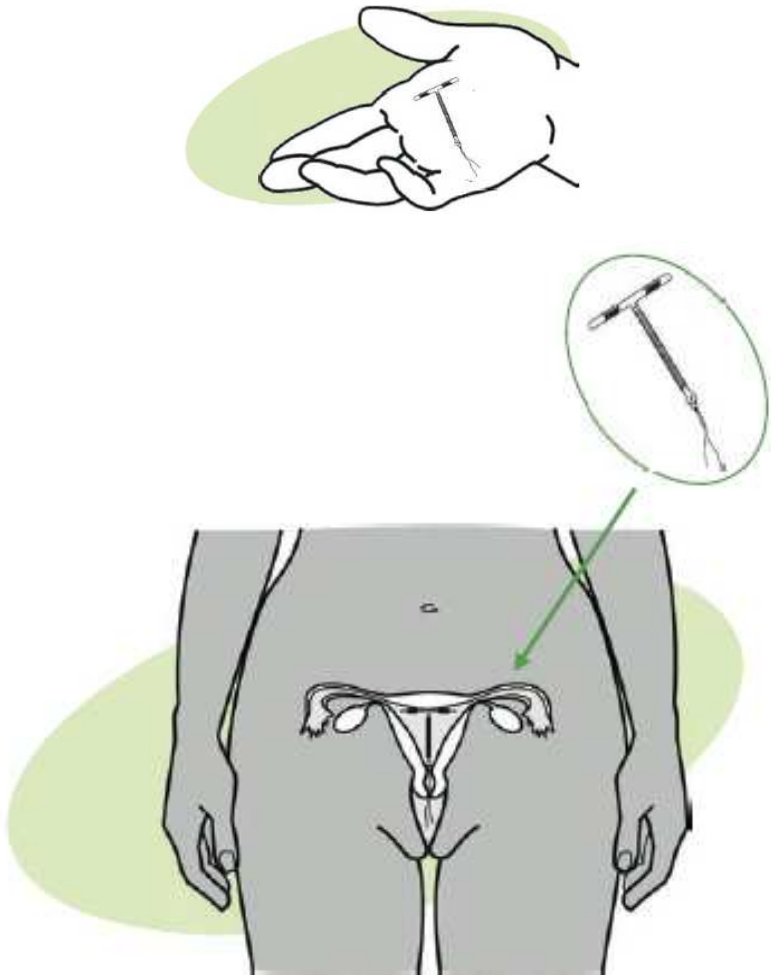
How it works

The IUD is inserted in the woman. The most common IUDs contain copper and they work by preventing sperm from reaching the egg. It can be used for up to 12 years and can be removed any time a woman wants to get pregnant. It can be inserted right after childbirth as well as at other times.

What to expect

In the first few months of use the woman may experience some cramping and heavier bleeding during monthly periods.

IUD



Tubal Ligation

How it works

Tubal ligation is the cutting or blocking of the fallopian tubes that carry the egg in a woman's body. The uterus is not removed. This procedure can be performed right after childbirth or at other times.

Tubal ligation is safe and permanent. It is for women or couples who no longer want more children.

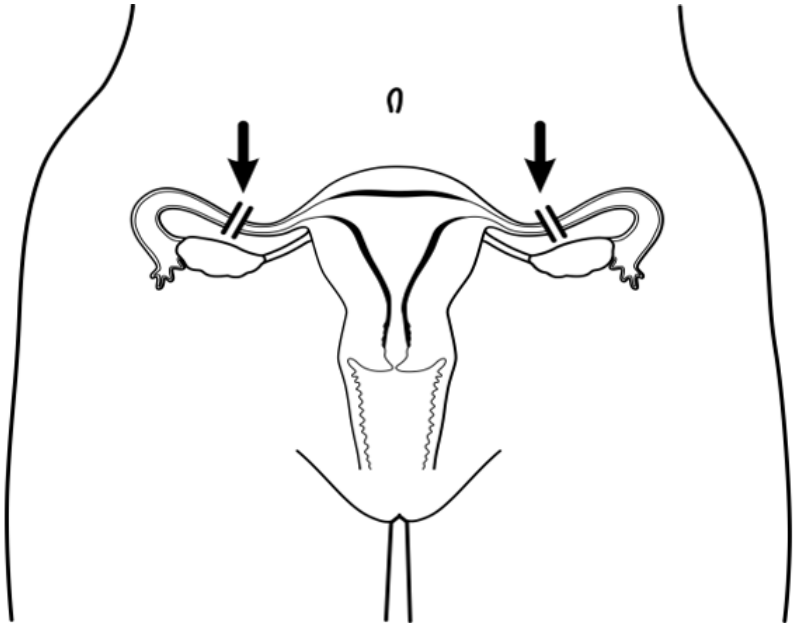
What to expect

A woman will never be able to become pregnant again following this surgery.

After a tubal ligation, some women may have soreness for a few days. Monthly bleeding will continue as usual. If the woman experiences other symptoms she should seek medical care.

Tubal Ligation

The arrows show where the fallopian tubes that carry the egg in a woman's body are cut or blocked.



Vasectomy

How it works

Vasectomy involves cutting or blocking the tubes that carry sperm in a man's body. The testicles are not removed.

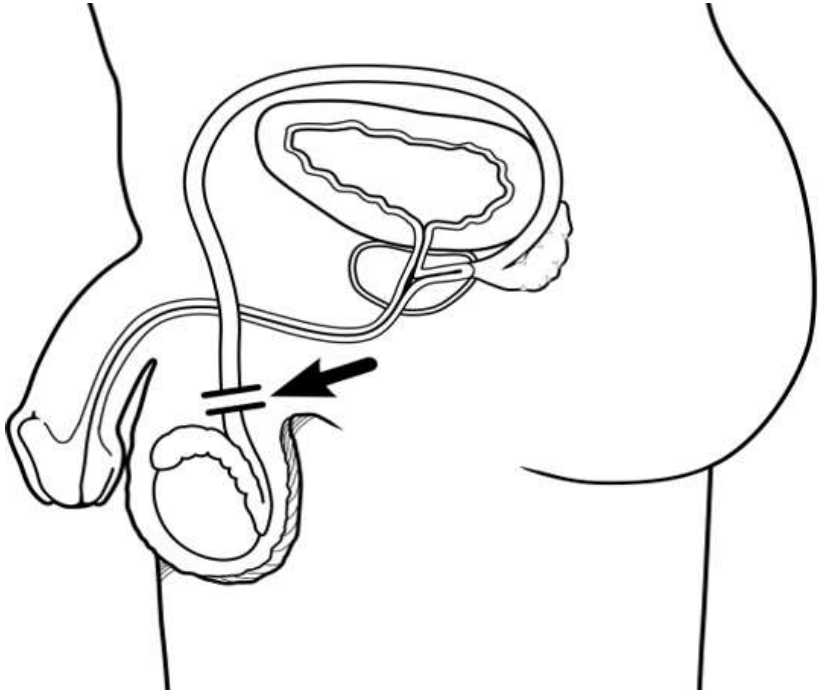
Vasectomy is a safe and permanent method for men or couples who no longer want more children.

What to expect

Vasectomy does not decrease sex drive, erection or ejaculation. After a vasectomy, a man must use a condom or another form of family planning to avoid pregnancy for the first 3 months after the operation. The man will not be able to father a child following this surgery.

Vasectomy

The arrow shows where the the tubes that carry sperm in a man's body are cut or blocked.



Morning-after Pill or Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP)

How it works

The morning-after pill can help prevent pregnancy if a woman takes it within 5 days of having unprotected sex. The sooner she takes the pill, the more effective it is. It should not be used instead of a regular method of family planning, because a woman can get pregnant right away. She should consider starting a regular method immediately. Emergency Contraceptive Pills do not cause abortion.

What to expect

Some women may have headaches or feel nauseous or vomit, but only for a few days.

Note: Taking this pill cannot prevent pregnancy if a couple has unprotected sex afterwards.

Morning-after Pill or Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP)

A woman should take this pill with a glass of water within five days of unprotected sex.



This book is intended to facilitate conversations on family planning using simple, non-technical language. Healthcare providers, community health volunteers or workers, religious leaders, or lay leaders may use this book. This book is not intended to be a full, comprehensive medical book on family planning. Those who use this book should share basic information and refer people who want more information to a health facility. Please consult a health professional for full counseling on all family planning methods.