

## Handout – Commonly used contraceptives

### Condoms

#### An external (male) condom is:

- 98% effectiveness with perfect and normal use.
- 82% effective when not always used correctly.

#### What is it?

A male condom is a barrier method put over the erect penis before sex. It helps to prevent getting or passing on a sexually transmitted infection (STI), including HIV, and helps to prevent pregnancy. Most external condoms are made of latex.

#### How does it work?

The condom is rolled onto an erect penis before sex. The condom prevents sperm from being passed from the man to his partner. They are used for penetrative sex (vagina or anus) and oral sex.



### Combined oral contraception - the pill

The combined contraceptive pill is a tablet that contains artificial versions of the two female hormones, oestrogen and progesterone. The pill needs to be taken at around the same time each day.

#### It is:

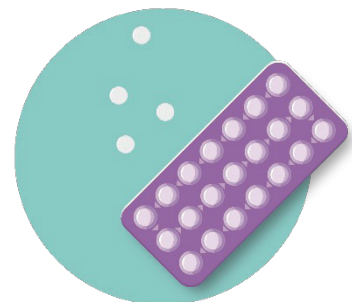
- Over 99% effectiveness with perfect and normal use.
- Over 91% effective when not always used correctly.

#### How does it work?

The combined pill releases the artificial form of the hormones - oestrogen and progesterone - which are absorbed into the body.

#### It works by:

- stopping ovulation (an egg being released from the ovaries).
- thickening the mucus at the neck of the womb (uterus) so it is difficult for sperm to enter the womb.
- thinning the lining of the womb and this prevents a fertilised egg from settling (implanting) in the womb.



## Handout – Commonly used contraceptives (continued)

### The mini pill

#### The mini pill is:

- Over 99% effectiveness with perfect and normal use.
- Over 91% effective when not always used correctly.

#### What is it?

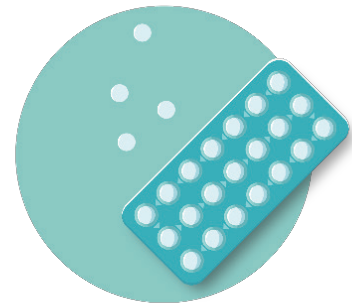
The mini pill is a progestogen-only pill and has no oestrogen in it. This pill needs to be taken at around the same time every day. If it is not taken correctly it could result in a pregnancy. The pill must be taken continuously without a 7 day break. Another method of contraception must be used if the pill is taken late.

#### How does it work?

The mini-pill releases the artificial form of the hormone progesterone into the body.

#### It works by:

- stopping ovulation (an egg being released from the ovaries).
- thickening the mucus at the neck of the womb (uterus) so it is difficult for sperm to enter the womb.
- thinning the lining of the womb and this prevents a fertilised egg from settling (implanting) in the womb.



### Injectable contraception

The injectable contraception contains an artificial form of the progesterone hormone.

#### It is:

- Over 99% effectiveness with perfect and normal use.
- Over 94% effective when not always used correctly.

#### What is it?

An injection of an artificial form of the hormone progesterone is injected into the arm or bum.

#### How does it work?

Progestogen is slowly absorbed from the muscle into the blood over a course of 12 weeks.

#### It works by:

- stopping ovulation (an egg being released from the ovaries).
- thickening the mucus at the neck of the womb (uterus) so that it is difficult for sperm to enter the womb.
- thinning the lining of the womb and this prevents a fertilised egg from settling (implanting) in the womb.



## Handout – Commonly used contraceptives (continued)

### The implant

#### The implant is:

- Over 99% effective

#### What is it?

It is a small flexible rod put under the skin of the upper arm. It lasts for up to 3 years once inserted. It can be felt under the skin but it can't be seen. Insertion and removal must only be done by a specially trained doctor.

#### How does it work?

##### It works by:

- stopping ovulation (an egg being released from the ovaries).
- thickening the mucus at the neck of the womb (uterus) so that it is difficult for sperm to enter the womb.
- thinning the lining of the womb and this prevents a fertilised egg from settling (implanting) in the womb.



### The patch

#### The patch is:

- Over 99% effectiveness with perfect and normal use.
- Over 91% effective when not always used correctly.

#### What is it?

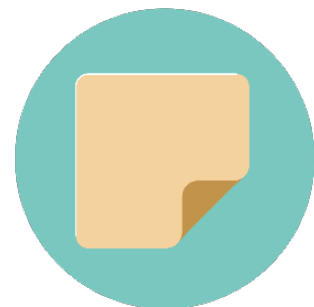
A patch is similar to a small plaster of 4cm by 5cm. Each patch lasts for 1 week; A new patch is put on every week for 3 weeks (21 days) in a row without a break, then a person may be advised to wait for a few days, up to 7 days before putting on a new patch. This advice will depend on the doctor's instructions.

#### How does it work?

The patch releases the artificial form of the hormones - oestrogen and progesterone - into the body.

##### It works by:

- stopping ovulation (an egg being released from the ovaries).
- thickening the mucus at the neck of the womb (uterus) so it is difficult for sperm to enter the womb.
- thinning the lining of the womb and this prevents a fertilised egg from settling (implanting) in the womb.



## Handout – Commonly used contraceptives (continued)

### Vaginal ring

**A vaginal ring is:**

- Over 99% effectiveness with perfect and normal use.
- Over 91% effective when not always used correctly.

**What is it?**

A vaginal ring is a small flexible ring. It is inserted into the vagina and left there for 3 weeks (21 days) without a break. A person may be advised wait for a few days-up to 7 days-before putting in the new ring. This advice will depend on the doctor's instructions.

**How does it work?**

The vaginal ring releases the artificial form of the hormones - oestrogen and progesterone - which are absorbed from the vagina and into the blood.

**It works by:**

- stopping ovulation (an egg being released from the ovaries).
- thickening the mucus at the neck of the womb (uterus) so it is difficult for sperm to enter the womb.
- thinning the lining of the womb and this prevents a fertilised egg from settling (implanting) in the womb.



For more detailed information on any of these contraceptives visit: [www.sexualwellbeing.ie](http://www.sexualwellbeing.ie)