

**An illustrated guide to family planning in Kenya. Colour lithograph by the IPPF Africa Regional Office, ca. 2000.**

**Publication/Creation**

Nairobi (P.O. Box 30234) : IPPF Africa Regional Office, [2000?] (Nairobi (P.O. Box 30502) : Printed by afropress ltd.)

**Persistent URL**

<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/b6xvx3av>

**License and attribution**

Conditions of use: it is possible this item is protected by copyright and/or related rights. You are free to use this item in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s).

**wellcome  
collection**

Wellcome Collection  
183 Euston Road  
London NW1 2BE UK  
T +44 (0)20 7611 8722  
E [library@wellcomecollection.org](mailto:library@wellcomecollection.org)  
<https://wellcomecollection.org>

# Family Planning Guide

## Oral Contraceptives

The "pill" is effective in over 90% of the women who take it as prescribed. The drugs control fertility by stopping the ovaries from releasing any ripe eggs. Oral contraceptives also keep the mucus in the cervix thick so that sperm cannot get through and they change the lining of the uterus which becomes thicker and the patient therefore bleeds less every month. The woman can begin taking the pill on any of the first five (5) days of the menstrual cycle counting Day 1 as the first day of bleeding. Thereafter she takes one pill per day at the same time of day — for 21 days. She then rests for 7 days during which time she will bleed and on the eighth day she begins her new packet of pills. She has thus a regular 28 day cycle — 21 days of pill taking followed by 7 days rest.



### Advantages

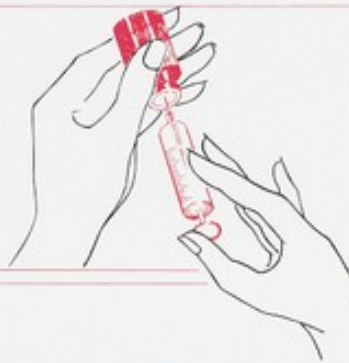
- If oral contraceptives are taken as prescribed, they will be highly effective in preventing pregnancy.
- They are simple to use, and no special preparations are necessary before intercourse.
- Since the pills are taken daily whether or not intercourse takes place, there is less chance for a woman to forget to use a contraceptive.
- The pill may improve menstrual problems such as irregular periods, cramps, and premenstrual tension.
- Oral contraceptives are an excellent method for a woman whose husband does not wish to take any responsibility for contraception.
- The main pill, most commonly used today does not usually decrease breast milk providing there is an abundant supply of the latter.

### Disadvantages

- If the woman forgets to take one pill she should take it as soon as she remembers or with the following day's pill.
- Most women do not have any serious side effects but a few experience some side effects such as nausea and breast fullness in the first few months. These are signs similar to that of early pregnancy and the patient must be re-assured that they will disappear.
- The patient should be weighed every six months at the family planning clinic to make sure there is no undue weight gain.

## Three-month Injectables

This injectable contraceptive prevents pregnancy for three months after each injection. It contains a single hormone, a progestogen, and prevents pregnancy in the same way that oral contraceptives do. Once an injection has been given in the hip area, the drug is slowly absorbed by the body over a three-month period. Pregnancy against pregnancy will continue as long as injections are given.



### Advantages

- This method is very effective. Its rate of success equates that of the most effective oral contraceptives.
- There is no danger of forgetting to take a pill.
- Since the injectable preparation contains no oestrogen, there are fewer side effects such as nausea, vomiting, and breast tenderness than with oral preparations containing oestrogen.
- The injectable preparation is safe and has been used many years, in higher doses, for the treatment of other conditions (such as habitual abortion and endometriosis) with no serious side effects.
- This method tests a couple from the very start and both of them control each time they have intercourse. The only time a woman concerns herself with contraception is once every three months, when it is time for a new injection.
- The three-month injectable will not affect a mother's flow of milk. In fact, it gives a slight increase in breast milk flow.

### Disadvantages

- The effects of each injection do not stop abruptly at the end of three months. On the average, a woman who stops injectable contraception must wait five months or longer to become pregnant than a woman who discontinues use of a diaphragm or IUD for example.
- Injectable contraception affects a woman's menstrual cycle. Some women have frequent bleeding and spotting while others do not menstruate at all. Most women will have irregular bleeding or spotting with less bleeding in total, usually decrease as treatment continues.
- Some women find they gain weight while receiving injections.
- A few women have experienced side effects with this method. These reactions have included dizziness, joint pains and headaches.

## Intrauterine Device

The "IUD" is a small flexible device made of plastic. It is placed in a woman's uterus by a doctor and is left in place for as long as she wants to prevent pregnancy. IUD's come in many different shapes. To insert one, a doctor threads it through an inserting device which strengthens out the IUD. Once the IUD is released in the uterus, it resumes its original curvature. This prevents it from falling out of the uterus. No one knows exactly how an IUD prevents pregnancy. It is thought the device may make a fertilized egg travel along the Fallopian tube more quickly than it usually would. Because of this, the ovum may not have enough time to develop as much as it should by the time it enters the uterus. Also, it may not allow the uterus enough time to prepare to receive the fertilized egg.



### Advantages

- IUD's are quite effective, but they are not as effective as oral and injectable contraceptives.
- An IUD will usually remain in place indefinitely. There is no need for any other protection, except checking to be sure it is in place.
- A woman using an IUD does not have to take daily medication. Because an IUD can be used for years, the method is inexpensive.

### Disadvantages

- Some women will expel an IUD from the uterus. To make sure this has not happened, a woman should check once a month to see that the device is in place. Most IUD's have a small thread which extends from the uterus into the vagina. By inserting a finger well into the vagina, a woman should be able to feel this thread.
- The woman should be told that some irregular bleeding and occasional backache may be considered as normal during the first 3 weeks after insertion of the IUD but will pass away thereafter.

## Condom

This is a very thin sheath or cover made of latex rubber. It is placed on the man's erect penis before intercourse to catch the semen and keep it from entering the woman's uterus. Condoms usually are packaged in rolled-up fashion. The small circle of rubber is placed over the end of the penis and the condom is unrolled to cover the length of the penis. To prevent semen from spilling after intercourse, the rim of the condom should be held to keep it from slipping off while the man withdraws from the woman.



### Advantages

- This is a simple, but effective, method of contraception.
- It is a good method for those women who want their husbands to be responsible for contraception or for those men who want to take on that responsibility.

### Disadvantages

- A man cannot be expected to use a condom permanently — it is therefore, to be viewed as a temporary method of family planning in most cases.
- Accidental pregnancy may occur if the condom should burst or if some semen should be spilled after intercourse.

## Diaphragm

This is a device made of soft rubber and shaped like a shallow cup. It has a flexible metal spring which forms the outer edge. A woman using a diaphragm first puts a small amount of contraceptive cream or jelly inside the cup and around the edge of the diaphragm. She then squashes the rim together and inserts the diaphragm into the vagina. Once the diaphragm is released, it will spring back to its original circular shape. When inserted properly, it completely covers the mouth of the uterus.



### Advantages

- A diaphragm is very effective when it is fitted properly and inserted properly.
- The diaphragm and jelly may be inserted any time before intercourse.
- A woman cannot feel a diaphragm when it is properly fitted and inserted correctly.
- This method is quite inexpensive. If proper care is taken of the diaphragm, it will last for years.

### Disadvantages

- The diaphragm must be measured and fitted by a doctor or qualified nursing sister.
- Many women find it difficult to learn how to insert a diaphragm properly.
- The diaphragm must be left in place for at least 6 hours after intercourse.
- The home conditions of many women in the developing countries e.g. lack of running water can make it difficult to ensure the cleanliness of a diaphragm.

## Creams, Jellies, Foams and Vaginal Tablets

All these are locally active contraceptives. They are placed in the vagina by means of a plastic applicator, and they provide protection in two ways. First, they kill sperm cells, and second, they form a shield over the cervix so no sperm can enter the uterus.



### Advantages

- These contraceptives can be bought without a prescription from a doctor.
- They are easy to use.
- There is nothing to remove after intercourse.

### Disadvantages

- Each of these contraceptives must be used just before intercourse.
- They must be in the vagina for 5 minutes before they will work.
- If intercourse occurs again within 8 hours another application is needed.
- Once they are in the woman's body, these contraceptives are effective for only about one hour.
- They are not very effective when used alone and therefore should only be used as a temporary method of family planning.