

# CONTRACEPTION AND SUBSTANCE USE: PRACTICAL ADVICE FOR WOMEN



the women's  
the royal women's hospital  
victoria australia

If you don't want to get pregnant, you need to use contraception (birth control).  
Sometimes drugs or alcohol can affect your ability to make decisions about birth control.

## Contraception will help protect you from getting pregnant

Contraception is also called birth control or family planning.

- » There are a number of different types of contraception available.
- » There are some types of contraception that last 3–10 years. These are called **Fit and Forget contraception** or LARCs (Long Acting Reversible Contraception). In most cases **Fit and Forget contraception** can be fitted at a clinic or by your GP.
- » Some organisations can give you contraception cheaply or even for free.

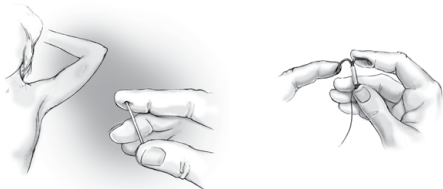
## Fit and Forget

There are two kinds of Fit and Forget contraception that you can use:

- » an implant that sits under the skin of your arm
- » an IUD (intra-uterine device). This is a small device that is placed inside your uterus (womb).

It's very easy for a health professional to remove Fit and Forget contraception if you don't like it or you are ready to get pregnant.

All contraception has possible side effects in a small number of users, so talk to your doctor about the contraception that will suit you best.



## Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

Regular condom use is the **only way** to protect against HIV/AIDS and other STIs.

**Fit and Forget contraception will NOT protect you from STIs.**

## What if my partner doesn't want to use birth control?

- » Ask your partner how he would feel if you became pregnant.
- » You have the right to choose the contraception that is best for you. There are methods of contraception that do not have to involve your partner.

## What if I want to have a baby?

- » If you are planning to have a baby or are pregnant, talk to your health professional first. Preparation for pregnancy is better for you and your baby's health.
- » Alcohol, cigarettes and some other drugs can be very unsafe in pregnancy, and may harm your baby.
- » Methadone or buprenorphine are much safer in pregnancy than heroin or other opiate drugs.

## Did you know?

- » You can get pregnant even if your periods are irregular or you don't have periods at all.
- » If you take methadone or buprenorphine, or you use heroin, your periods may be irregular.
- » You can safely get pregnant and have a baby if you are on methadone or buprenorphine.

## Where to get more information

- » Your local doctor (GP)
- » Women's Health Information Centre (Victoria only)  
Royal Women's Hospital  
Tel: (03) 8345 3045 or 1800 442 007 (rural callers)  
Email: whic@thewomens.org.au

## Related fact sheets

- » Contraception – Your Choices
- » Intra Uterine Device (IUD)
- » Contraceptive Implants

Developed with the assistance of Turning Point



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