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.

**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 Welcome Centre (Victoria only)
  Royal Women’s Hospital
  Tel: (03) 8345 3037 or 1800 442 007 (rural callers)
  Email: wwcadmin@thewomens.org.au

**Related fact sheets**

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

Developed with the assistance of Turning Point

**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.**

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