



ACTIVATE

THE CENTER TO BRING ADOLESCENT
SEXUAL & REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH RESEARCH
TO YOUTH-SUPPORTING PROFESSIONALS

*Helping Young People Choose the
Birth Control Method Right for Them*

Resource Tutorial
Birth Control Methods and
Birth Control Method Choice



Tutorial Purpose

This tutorial will show youth-supporting professionals how to use Activate's "Helping Young People Choose the Birth Control Method Right for Them" resource.

Birth Control Methods Guide

- Instructions for using the guide
- Background information
- Reflective questions
- Conversation starters
- Birth Control Methods Matrix

Helping Young People Choose the Birth Control Method Right for Them: A Guide for Youth-Supporting Professionals

Amanda M. Griffin, Colleen Schlecht, Emma Pliskin, and Amy Dworsky

Introduction

"Helping Young People Choose the Birth Control Method Right for Them: A Guide for Youth Supporting Professionals" (the Guide) is a research-informed resource designed for professionals who work with young people who experience the child welfare or justice systems, homelessness, or disconnection from school and work. It is intended to facilitate a conversation that centers young people's birth control preferences, needs, and priorities. The guidance it offers was informed by research and conversations with young people who have lived expertise and with youth-supporting professionals. By using this resource, youth-supporting professionals can empower all young people, regardless of their gender or sexual identity, to choose the birth control method that is right for them.

The Guide includes three sections that are meant to be used together:

1. Instructions for Using the Guide
2. Background
3. Conversation Starters and Birth Control Methods Matrix

"[A Birth Control Methods Information Booklet](#)" (Information Booklet) provides detailed information about all the birth control methods included in the birth control methods matrix. It also includes a glossary of terms. Professionals can use this resource to learn about birth control methods they are not familiar with and can share the information with young people to empower them to choose the birth control method that is right for them.

Instructions for Using the Guide and the Information Booklet

Familiarize yourself with the questions, statements, and birth control methods matrix in the Conversation Starters and Birth Control Methods Matrix ahead of talking with a young person. For additional guidance, read Activate's "[Seven Tips for Youth-Supporting Professionals for Talking with Youth about Sexual and Reproductive Health](#)."

1. Review the Background section which summarizes the research informing this Guide.
2. Reflect on the questions at the top of page 4 before starting a conversation about birth control with a young person.
3. Record the young person's responses or have the young person record their responses to the five conversation-starter questions at the bottom of page 4.

Activate: The Collective to Bring Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health Research to Youth-Supporting Professionals aims to bridge the gap between research and practice in support of the Office of Population Affairs' mission to prevent teen pregnancy and promote adolescent health. Activate translates research into practice by creating research-based resources for use by professionals who support young people who experience the child welfare and/or justice systems, homelessness, and/or disconnection from school and work (i.e., opportunity youth).

Birth Control Methods Information Booklet

- Information about each birth control method listed in the Birth Control Methods Matrix
- Glossary of key terms

Helping Young People to Choose the Birth Control Method Right for Them

Birth Control Methods Information Booklet

Amanda M. Griffin, Colleen Schlecht,
Emma Pliskin, and Amy Dworsky

Glossary of Key Terms¹⁶

This glossary of terms may help you understand the information contained in this booklet. It can also be used to explain the information in this booklet to young individuals.

Barrier birth control methods prevent pregnancy by blocking sperm from passing through the cervix. Examples include condoms, diaphragms, foam, sponges, and cervical caps.

Basal body temperature method is a fertility awareness-based birth control method that involves tracking body temperature over time to predict ovulation.

Birth control is any behavior, device, medicine, or procedure used to prevent pregnancy—also known as contraception.

Cisgender refers to a person whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth.

Cervical mucus monitoring is one fertility awareness-based birth control method that involves tracking changes in the appearance and quantity of cervical mucus.

Cervix is the narrow, lower part of the uterus, with a small opening that connects the uterus to the vagina.

Contraception is any behavior, device, medicine, or procedure used to prevent pregnancy—also known as birth control.

Resource Development



Identified a need for a resource on birth control methods



Reviewed the literature on factors that influence birth control choices



Sought input from youth-supporting professionals and young people



Had the resource reviewed by medical and public health experts

Tutorial Modules

Background: Birth Control Methods and Birth Control Method Choice

Module 1: Using the Reflective Questions in the Birth Control Methods Guide

Module 2: Using the Conversation Starters in the Birth Control Methods Guide

Module 3: Using the Birth Control Methods Matrix in the Birth Control Methods Guide

Module 4: Using the Birth Control Methods Information Booklet

Learning Objectives

After completing this module, you will know about:

- Factors that influence young people's choices about birth control.
- Different categories of birth control methods.
- Different birth control methods within each category.



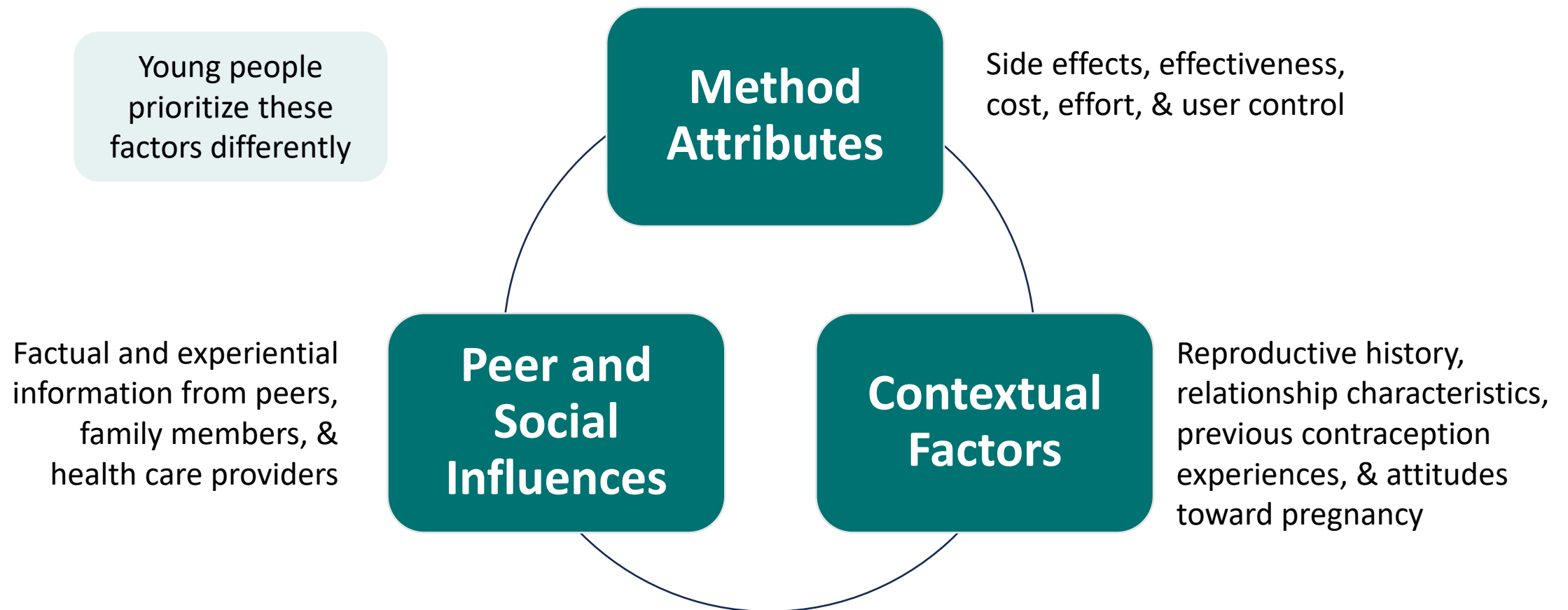
Research on Choosing a Birth Control Method



Choosing a birth control method is an extremely personal decision

- No one method is right for everyone.
- Young people need medically accurate information about the full range of birth control options.

What factors influence young people's birth control choices?



What are the limitations of the research on birth control method choice?

Research primarily focused on cisgender women

- Cisgender men have largely been excluded, although some studies have examined the role that partners play in contraceptive decision making.

Limited research involving LGBTQ+ young people

- Many researchers assume incorrectly that LGBTQ+ individuals are not at risk for pregnancy.

Limited research involving Activate's populations

- Few studies look at factors important to Activate's populations.
- Challenges include small and nonrepresentative samples of youth who have experienced the child welfare or justice systems, homelessness, or disconnection from work and school.

Cisgender woman: Identifying as a woman and assigned female at birth

Cisgender man: Identifying as a man and assigned male at birth

Non-binary: Identifying as neither a woman or a man

Several factors influence the birth control choices made by Activate's populations

Experiences of family
and friends

Responses of
partners

Ease of maintenance

Side effects

Insurance coverage

Pregnancy attitudes



What are the different categories of birth control young people can choose from?



Birth Control Categories

Long-term reversible

Short-term hormonal

Short-term barrier

Short-term behavioral

Permanent

Knowing about the full range of birth control options available to young people is important for youth-supporting professionals.

Long-Term Reversible Birth Control Methods

Most effective methods of birth control

Can be removed at any time

Invisible to a partner or others

Last for several years

Inserted or injected into the user's body by a healthcare provider

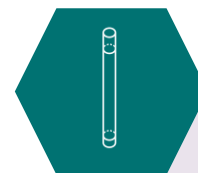
Examples of Long-Term Reversible Birth Control Methods



Levonorgestrel
intrauterine system
(LNG IUD)



Copper T
intrauterine device
(IUD)



Implant

Short-Term Hormonal Birth Control Methods

Use hormones to prevent pregnancy

Dispensed by a healthcare provider or pharmacist

Not quite as effective as long-term reversible methods

Require the user to routinely take an action (i.e., take a pill or insert a device)

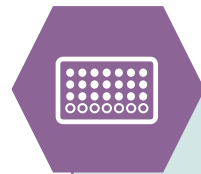
Examples of Short-Term Hormonal Birth Control Methods



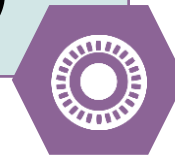
Contraceptive ring



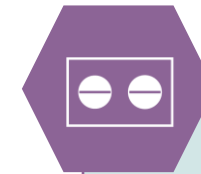
Injection or “shot”



Oral contraceptives
 (“the pill”)



Transdermal
contraceptive patch



Emergency
contraceptive pill

Short-Term Barrier Birth Control Methods

Block sperm from fertilizing an egg

May require appointments for device fitting

Hormone-free

Condoms also prevent STIs

Must remember to use before/during each instance of intercourse

Lower efficacy than hormonal and long-term reversible methods

Examples of Short-Term Barrier Birth Control Methods



Diaphragm



Cervical Cap



Sponge



Spermicide/
contraceptive gel



Internal (female)
condom



External (male)
condom

Short-Term Behavioral Birth Control Methods

User alters behavior to prevent pregnancy

Zero cost

Largest gaps in failure rates between perfect and typical use

Do not require a visit to a healthcare provider or pharmacy

Examples of Short-Term Behavioral Birth Control Methods



Fertility-based awareness



Withdrawal

Permanent Birth Control Methods

Require a surgical procedure

Highly effective at preventing pregnancy

Non-reversible

Examples of Permanent Birth Control Methods



Tubal ligation
or “tying tubes”



Vasectomy

Five Categories of Birth Control Methods

Category	Description
Long-term reversible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Most effective reversible birth control method• Last for several years• Removable at any time
Short-term hormonal	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use hormones to prevent pregnancy• Effective but not as effective as long-term reversible methods
Short-term barrier	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prevent pregnancy by blocking sperm from passing through the cervix• Less effective than long-term reversible or hormonal methods
Short-term behavioral	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Require users to engage in specific behaviors to prevent pregnancy• Less effective than long-term reversible or hormonal methods
Permanent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Permanently prevent pregnancy• Highly effective

Key Takeaways

- Birth control choices can be influenced by method attributes, peers and social influences, and contextual factors.
- There's limited research on birth control choice among young people who are not cisgender women.
- There are major categories of birth control methods, ranging from short-term to permanent.

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