TRANS HUB

HEALTH & GENDER AFFIRMATION IN NSW

CONTRACEPTION FOR EVERY BODY

A trans and gender diverse guide to contraception

TRANSHUB.ORG.AU

Many trans people have sex throughout their lives. Some of the ways trans people have sex can result in a pregnancy.

People have sex for all sorts of reasons, including for fun, pleasure or to share a connection with someone. Sometimes pregnancy is an intended outcome of sex but other times pregnancy is the last thing a person wants. You can find out more about pregnancy at transhub.org.au/pregnancy.

Contraception means the things people can do to prevent a pregnancy. There are a range of options to choose from depending on your body, wants and needs, existing or future hormonal affirmation and more.

While talking about bodies in this pamphlet, we use medical terms like 'cervix', 'uterus', 'sperm', and 'egg' to describe our bits. This is just so you know what we're talking about, as our communities often use similar words for quite different body parts.

When talking about yourself, or being referred to by others, we encourage you to use and request the language you feel most comfortable with!

CHOOSING THE RIGHT CONTRACEPTION FOR YOU

The type of contraception that is right for you and your sexual partners depends on things like pre-existing health issues, medication history and your body (ie. If you have a uterus or not). Some trans people may not need to use contraception due to having had surgery that removes reproductive organs. The most important thing is finding a form of contraception that you are comfortable with. Your choice of contraception may also be influenced by possible sides effects, such as stopping bleeding.

Contraceptives that do not contain hormones or progestogen-only contraceptives are not thought to interfere with testosterone-based gender affirming hormones. Estrogen-based contraception may affect the body's uptake of testosterone.

Talking with a trusted health professional can help you decide what option is best for you.

Barrier Methods

Barriers are a form of contraception that stop sperm from reaching an egg. There are latex and non-latex options, and include external or internal condoms, and diaphragms. Condoms are effective at preventing pregnancy when used correctly.

Condoms are the only form of contraception that can also help prevent STIs.

IUDs

There are two main types of IUD (intra-uterine device) and both are over 99% effective at preventing pregnancy. IUDs are very small and shaped like a 'T', with a short string attached to the bottom. IUDs are placed inside the uterus by a specially trained doctor or nurse.

Copper IUDs are made from plastic and copper, which mainly work by stopping sperm from reaching the egg. They can also prevent a fertilised egg from attaching to the wall of the uterus. They need to be replaced every 5-10 years, and can be removed earlier. They can cause menstruation to be heavier and longer.

Hormonal IUDs (Mirena or Kyleena) are made from plastic and contain a small dose of a progestogen (a hormone).

The hormonal IUDs work by thickening the mucus at the cervix, stopping sperm from entering the uterus and reaching the egg. They also thin the lining of the uterus so that it is hard for a fertilised egg to implant there. They need to be replaced every 5 years, and can be removed earlier. They usually cause menstruation to be lighter, or to stop altogether.

Contraceptive pills

There are two kinds of contraceptive pill: combined hormonal contraceptive pills, which contain estrogen and progestogen, and progestogen only pills (POP or mini-pills). If used correctly, contraceptive pills are 99.5% effective. All contraceptive pills must be taken at the same time each day. The pill can be less effective if taken late, forgotten or missed.

Some contraceptive pills work by stopping the release of an egg from the ovary (known as ovulation) each month. Contraceptive pills also work by thickening the mucus of the cervix, stopping sperm from entering the uterus and reaching the egg.

Contraceptive implants

A contraceptive implant is a small rod inserted under the skin of the upper inner arm,

which releases a small amount of progestogen. Implants are close to 100% effective and work by preventing the release of an egg from the ovary. An implant needs to be replaced every 3 years, and can be removed earlier.

Regular bleeding patterns will change when using a contraceptive implant, and bleeding can be unpredictable or irregular. Talk to your doctor about this if it happens to you as there are many ways to manage this.

Contraceptive injections

Contraceptive injections are an injection of a progestogen into the muscle of your arse or upper arm. The injections work by preventing the release of an egg from the ovary.

Injections are required every 12 weeks to remain effective, and fertility can take a little while to return after stopping. For it to be most effective, it is important to follow the directions of your doctor.

Emergency Contraceptive Pills

If you have had sex recently and are concerned that you might be at risk of an unwanted pregnancy, the emergency contraceptive pill is available. It is sometimes also known as the 'morning after pill'.

Emergency contraceptive pills work by preventing or delaying the release of an egg from the ovary.

There are two types of emergency contraceptive pill that are taken shortly after having sex that could result in pregnancy:

- Levonorgestrel emergency contraceptive pill, which can be taken within 3 days
- Ulipristal Acetate emergency contraceptive pill, which can be taken within 5 days

The emergency contraceptive pill works better the sooner you take it and is available without needing a prescription from many pharmacies, your GP and Family Planning NSW clinics.

Hormones as contraception

Testosterone treatment is not an effective form of contraception for people with a uterus, even after long term use and if you've stopped menstruating. Estrogen and other gender affirming hormone treatments are not effective form of contraception for people with testes, even after long term use.

If you are having sex that could result in an unwanted pregnancy, it's a good idea to use a gender affirming method of contraception in addition to any gender affirming hormones.

family planning australia

Reproductive & Sexual Health

This resource was created by TransHub in partnership with Family Planning NSW.
Family Planning NSW provides reproductive and sexual health services for every body in every family.
www.fpnsw.org.au

TransHub is ACON's digital information and resource platform for all trans and gender diverse people in NSW, their loved ones, allies and health providers.
www.transhub.org.au

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