Family Planning
Welfare Association of NT Inc.

ABN 38 812 238 738

Family Planning Welfare Association of the NT Inc exists to provide quality health care and education services in reproductive and sexual health

CONTRACEPTION FOR MEN

Ideally, birth control is a shared responsibility with the man and the woman choosing and using a method of contraception that is acceptable to both of them. In practice that isn't always the case in that the woman usually takes responsibility because she will be the one who is most affected by an unplanned pregnancy.

So how can a man help?

- Discuss how you feel about pregnancy and parenting – if and when you want children; and which method of contraception you would like to use in the mean time
- Support your partner if she uses female contraception. For example, you can help her remember to take her pill every day – and if she forgets, be willing to use alternatives such as condoms for 7 days or practice abstinence.
- Consider male contraceptives either as a temporary measure in avoiding pregnancy or as a permanent method, if it suits the relationship

What male methods are there to choose from?

The most commonly used and most reliable methods are the condom or a vasectomy.
Period abstinence, withdrawal and non-penetrative sex are other methods that are sometimes used by men.
And, in the case of an emergency either when the condom breaks or you have unexpected intercourse, you should know about the Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP) available for women.

1. The condom:

Condoms are available at Family Planning Clinics and Rural Health Clinics (for free) as well as from chemists and most supermarkets in Australia. They are also available in some club toilets.
The reason condoms are popular is because they are very effective and readily available. In addition they help to prevent the transmission of infections that sometimes occur during intercourse.
Reasons for not using a condom can be numerous however the couple needs to weigh up the possibility of an unplanned pregnancy or STI risk.
Condoms are either made from latex or polyurethane. Polyurethane condoms are used when either person has known reactions to latex.
Condoms can be fun and should be included as part of the lovemaking experience. Condoms come in a variety of colours, textures and flavours.

Directions for use:

- Condoms must be stored in a cool place and the package must be free of breaks.
- Open the package carefully to avoid damage to the condom.
- Put the condom on the penis before any contact is made with your partner.
- The condom must be put on after the penis has become erect and hard.
- Place the condom on the penis with the roll upwards so that it can be unrolled.
- Squeeze the air out of the tip of the condom (this allows room for 'cum' during ejaculation).
- Roll the condom down to the base of the penis as far as it will go.
- After sex, withdraw the penis whilst still erect i.e. before it becomes floppy (this is so that the condom doesn't slip off the penis when withdrawn and left inside of the woman's vagina).
- Each condom can only be used once and must be thrown away in appropriate receptacle after use.
- Use a water based lubricant to prevent condom breakages

2. Vasectomy

As a permanent method of contraception, male sterilization is performed by cutting and closing the tubes that carry sperm from the testes to the penis.

- It is a minor procedure usually done under local anesthetic in a doctor's surgery or Day Surgery in a hospital.
- Sometimes men experience bruising and swelling afterwards. Most men feel able to resume normal activities within 24-48 hours.
- The man does not become sterile immediately, as sperm are still present in the tube above the operative site
- It is important to use other contraception until a sperm count is done and it shows there are no sperm left (which can be at least 8 weeks after the operation).
- It is important to remember there will be no changes in a man's virility; his ability to 'be a man' or ability to 'perform' sexually.
- It is important to remember that during an orgasm, seminal fluid will still be ejaculated from the penis – but now without the sperm.
- Sterilisation is 99.85% effective.

Reversals have been performed but there is no guarantee that it will be successful

3. Periodic Abstinence

(Natural Family Planning/Rhythm/Billings Method)

There are certain times during a woman's cycle that she is less fertile. All these methods are based on this fact and the aim is to identify this time. It is not easy to discover when you can have sexual intercourse without risking pregnancy, but certain indicators such as temperature changes and changes in the cervical and vaginal mucous have been helpful in finding the safe time. It is recommended that a couple obtain assistance in learning this method.

It also involves the cooperation of both the man and the woman in avoiding intercourse, so that pregnancy does not occur.

4. Withdrawal

This method involves the withdrawal of the penis before ejaculation, so that no fluid is deposited in the vagina or around it. This method has a high failure rate, but it is better than no method at all and does suit some couples. It is important to remember that any precum potentially can have sperm.

5. Emergency Contraceptive Pill (ECP)

In an emergency situation, such as intercourse without contraception or contraceptive failure, it is possible to obtain a pill which may help prevent pregnancy. This pill can be obtained from your local chemist, GP or Family Planning Clinic and need to be taken as soon as possible but certainly within 120 hours

For further information call:

Family Planning NT 8948 0144 or visit www.fpwnt.com.au

NT Health Direct 1800 022 222