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How to start birth control after an abortion

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You can start birth control right after your abortion if you're ready

 [by Colleen Denny, MD](#)

Having an abortion [doesn't change your chances of getting pregnant in the future](#). In fact, you can get pregnant again pretty quickly after an abortion. So, if another pregnancy isn't in your plans soon after your abortion, it's a good idea to talk with your provider about starting birth control. Here are some common questions about starting a method after an abortion:

How soon after an abortion can you start birth control?

It depends on [what type of abortion you have](#). If you have an abortion procedure, it's totally safe (and often convenient!) to start birth control on the same day as your abortion. That means you can get an IUD, an implant, or the shot in the clinic, or start using the pill, the patch, or the ring that same day.

If you have a medication abortion (sometimes called "the abortion pill"), you'll be able to start hormonal birth control methods like the pill, the shot, the patch, and the ring immediately after your abortion is complete (that is, as soon as you've finished the heavier bleeding that starts after the last pills). You can get other methods—like an IUD—as soon as you have your follow up visit, usually 1–2 weeks after you take the abortion pills.

For methods that you only use at the time you're having sex, like condoms, internal condoms, the sponge, the diaphragm, the cervical cap, and spermicide, you can start using those whenever you're ready to start having sex again after any type of abortion.


How do you pick the best birth control to use after an abortion?

Picking a method to use after an abortion is just like picking a birth control any other time. Think about what matters most to you in your method. Is your top priority using the method that will be the most effective at preventing pregnancy? Something easy to use? Something that makes your period lighter? Something that you can stop and start without seeing a provider? There are good birth control options for all of these. Check out Bedsider's [method explorer](#) for help choosing and speak to your provider before your abortion to make a birth control plan.

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abortion?

It does! Actually, if you start birth control within a week of your abortion, you'll be protected against pregnancy right away. This means that when you feel ready to have sex again, you don't need to use a back-up method like condoms or internal condoms.

If you wait more than a week after your abortion procedure or finishing your medication abortion pills to start a birth control method with hormones (like the pill, the patch, the ring, or the hormonal IUD), you will need to either wait to have sex or use a back-up method (like condoms or internal condoms) during sex for the first 7 days after starting your method. If you're not quite sure if you need back-up, ask your provider.

What if you're not ready to choose a birth control method on the day of your abortion?

It's totally okay (and normal!) if you're not ready to choose a birth control method on the day of your abortion. If you need a little more time to think, consider making a visit to follow up 1–2 weeks after your abortion (if you have the medication abortion, you will need to have a follow up anyway to make sure the abortion is complete). Make sure to use a back-up method, like condoms or internal condoms, if you have sex before starting your new method.

What if you were on birth control before your abortion and you want to switch?

Switching methods is always a legit move, whether it's after an abortion or at any other time. Your provider can help you think through what you did and didn't like about methods you've used in the past and [explore your options](#).

What if you can't get birth control at the place where you get your abortion?

No problem! There are lots of places where providers can help you get started on a birth control method. Check out our [clinic finder](#) to find a provider who can help you get the birth control you want. If an in-person appointment doesn't fit your schedule, you can also check out these [telemedicine companies](#) where you can get birth control online!

Colleen Denny, MD, is an attending ObGyn at Bellevue Hospital in New York City, where she is the Medical Director of the Women's Clinic, and a clinical assistant professor with the NYU School of Medicine. She enjoys taking care of women in all phases of life and is especially interested in issues related to contraception access and public health. Outside of work, she's a runner, a dancer, and a bit of a crossword puzzle nerd.

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