

Abstinence

Abstinence refers to not having sex. There are many forms of sexual abstinence, but in terms of using this as a method of contraception, it means avoiding vaginal intercourse. This type of abstinence can be effective for preventing unwanted pregnancy while allowing a couple to be involved in other forms of closeness, but it has a significant failure rate.

How does it work?

Choosing not to have sex may seem to be the most certain way to prevent pregnancy. It takes a very high level of self-control and communication between partners. If abstinence is used as a contraception method, both partners must make sure to avoid any contact between the penis and the vagina and also be cautious not to have the pre-ejaculate or ejaculate, come in close contact with the vagina.

How effective is it?

Total abstinence is theoretically 100% effective in preventing pregnancy. In practice, however, abstinence is not particularly effective. Abstinence education programs have not been found to reduce the risk of unplanned pregnancy, nor reduce STIs. This method is much more effective with older, mature couples and less effective when alcohol or drugs are involved and when there are strong sexual feelings between a couple.

Advantages

- + Theoretically the most effective method of contraception
- + Safe and no cost
- + No side effects

Disadvantages

- Can be challenging over time
- Partners are unprepared if a change of mind suddenly occurs
- Requires both partners to be fully committed to using the method