



# Contraception for women

**English**  
July 2016

**Every woman  
has a right to  
plan her family  
and choose the  
right time to  
have children.**

If you want to plan when to have children, you need to use contraception. Both men and women can use contraception.

In this brochure we talk about some of the contraception available in Australia for women. This brochure provides an overview of contraception options but to find the best contraception for you, speak with a doctor or a nurse.

## Available contraception for women

### IMPLANT (IMPLANON)



#### HOW IT WORKS:

A small plastic tube is placed by the doctor under the skin of your upper arm. It releases a low dose of the hormone progestogen, which stops the woman's ovaries releasing an egg each month. The implant must be prescribed, inserted and removed by a doctor.

#### ADVANTAGES:

From the moment it is placed in the body it lasts up to 3 years.

You don't need to remember to take the contraception on a daily basis.

It is a very cheap or sometimes free.

If you decide to have a child you can remove it and you will be fertile soon again.

#### CONSIDERATIONS:

In the first six months of use, it can make some women bleed more than usual when they get their period, not bleed at all or have continuous little bleeding in between their periods.

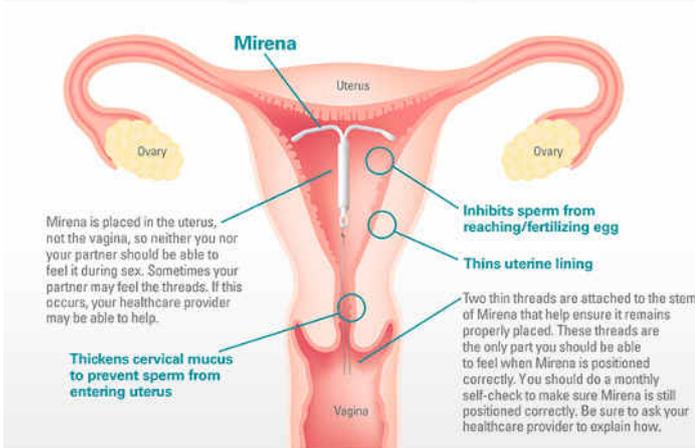
#### COST:

If you have a Health Care card or a Medicare card it is free as it is subsidised by the government. If you don't have a Medicare card it costs about \$35 once every 3 years.

## INTRA-UTERINE DEVICE (IUD)



Mirena prevents pregnancy, most likely in several ways (as highlighted below in teal). Most likely, the different actions work together to prevent pregnancy.



### HOW IT WORKS:

A small piece of plastic in a 'T' shape is inserted inside your uterus. It releases a low dose of a hormone similar to progesterone which prevents the egg and the sperm meeting. The IUD must be prescribed, inserted and removed by a doctor.

### ADVANTAGES:

From the moment it is placed in the body it lasts up to 5 years.

You don't need to remember to take the contraception on a daily basis.

It is a very cheap or sometimes free.

It can help in reducing excessive menstrual bleeding.

If you decide to have a child you can remove it and you will be fertile soon again.

### CONSIDERATIONS:

Irregular menstrual bleeding is common at the start but usually bleeding becomes lighter and shorter after a while.

### COST:

If you have a Health Care card or a Medicare card it doesn't cost anything as it is subsidised by the Government.

If you don't have a Medicare card it costs about \$35 once every 5 years.

## PILL (COMBINED)



### HOW IT WORKS:

It is a pill consisting of two hormones (oestrogen and progestogen) that prevents the woman's egg being released. The pill needs to be taken every day at the same time.

### ADVANTAGES:

It can regulate the menstrual cycle and reduce period pain.

### CONSIDERATIONS:

You need to remember to take it every day at the same time if you want it to work properly. If a pill is taken more than 24 hours late it may not be effective.

If you suffer from some medical conditions, the pill may not be good for you.

### COST:

If you have a Health Card or Medicare card it costs approximately \$8 every 4 months.

If you don't have Medicare card it can cost between \$20 and \$30 a month.

## EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTIVE PILL (ECP)



### HOW IT WORKS:

It reduces the chance of an unintended pregnancy after unprotected sex (for example if you did not use contraception at all, if you forgot to take your usual contraceptive pill or if you used a condom which broke during sex). The first dose must be taken as soon as possible (within a maximum of 72 hours) after unprotected sex and a second dose exactly 12 hours later. It thickens the cervical mucus making sperm inactive.

### ADVANTAGES:

The ECP is available from any pharmacy without a doctor's prescription.

### CONSIDERATIONS:

It is more effective if taken within 72 hours (3 days) from when you had sex, but it may be effective up to 96 hours (4 days).

### COST:

\$15 with or without the Health Care and Medicare card.

**Most contraceptives need to be prescribed by a doctor. This is because the doctor has to:**

- › discuss with you the different options.
- › consider your age, lifestyle and health issues.
- › provide you with a prescription for the contraception.
- › review and change the contraception if it is not working for you.