

Couple Contraception

HIV
Rights

Pregnancy



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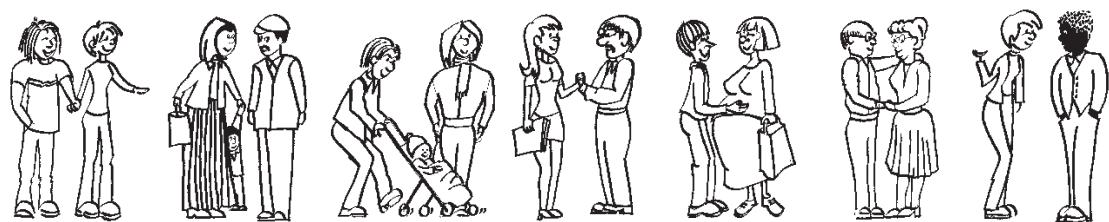
From one country to another, the forms of contraception available, planning for pregnancy, birth as well as sexuality talk vary.

This booklet on sexual health matters is for all women immigrants in Switzerland.

We hope it will help you understand better our practices and choose the right moment for a pregnancy under the best circumstances.

Everywhere in Switzerland, you can be heard, informed or counselled in family planning and Aids prevention centers.

A list of useful contacts is available on the website: **www.isis-info.ch**



Female genital organs

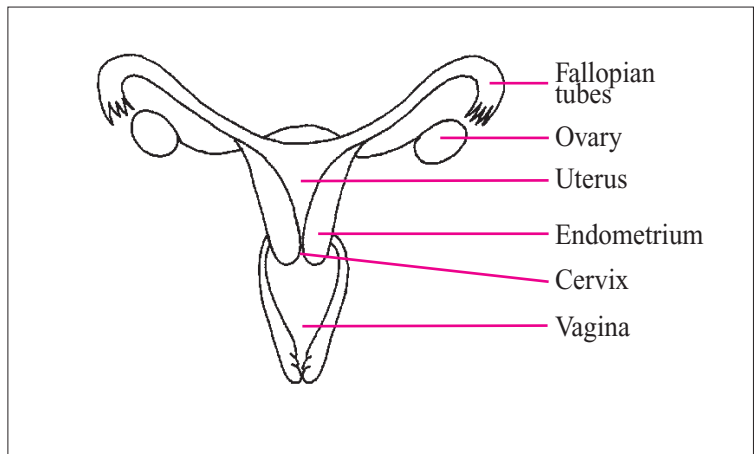
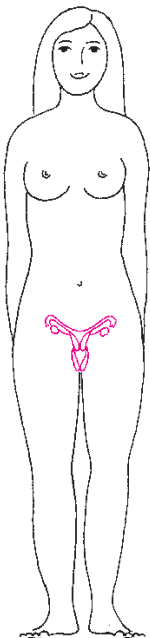
The outer part of the female genital organs (sex) is the **vulva**. It is formed of labia (lips) which rim the vagina and the urethra. Urethra is a thin tube which carries urine from the bladder. Passing over the urethra is the **clitoris**, a small sensitive organ which plays an important role in sexual excitement.

The vagina...

...is a supple tube 7 to 10 cm long. It is where the man's penis enters during sexual intercourse. It is very elastic so it can stretch around the baby during labour. It also carries the menstrual blood. Sexual desire produces the lubrication of the vagina which facilitates penetration.

The hymen...

...is a thin membrane partly open and situated at the entrance of the vagina that women have when virgins. Its shape is different from one woman to another. Some women do not have a hymen. Generally, it breaks during the first sexual intercourse. Slight spotting may occur in some cases.



Uterus or Womb

It is where the foetus develops itself. It looks like a pear upside down. In the womb, a thin layer of mucous called the endometrium grows each cycle. When you are pregnant, the endometrium forms a nest for the embryo but if fecundation does not take place, it is shed through the monthly period.

The lower part which joins the vagina to uterus is called the cervix. It is a small opening which allows the passage of menstrual blood and spermatozoa. At birth time, the **cervix** and vagina open and stretch to make a passage for the baby.

Ovaries

There are two ovaries, each about the size of an almond and its shape. They have two functions:

- ◆ They produce sexual hormones which regulate the cycle.
- ◆ They produce a mature egg cell once a month (ovulation).

The fallopian tubes...

... are two thin tubes between 10 to 15 cm long that connect the uterus to the ovaries which receive the ovules. The fecondation takes place in there. The fertilized egg then goes down to the uterus.

The female cycle...

... is the time elapsed between the first day of the monthly period and the first day of the next monthly period. The cycle can last from 21 to 35 days. Periods begin around the age of 11 to 15 and ends between the age of 45 to 55. The end of the cycle is called the menopause.

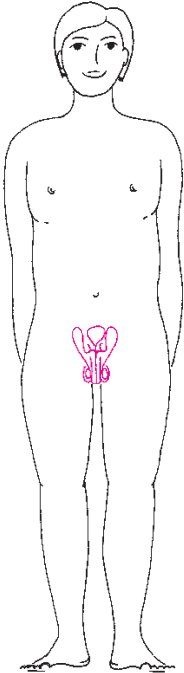
At each cycle women prepare themselves to an eventual pregnancy by the growth of the endometrium. Ovulation takes place 15 days before the next monthly period. Sexual intercourse around the time of ovulation is the best moment to get pregnant.

Ovulation does not always happen at the same moment, the safe period method is therefore not very reliable if you want to avoid a pregnancy.

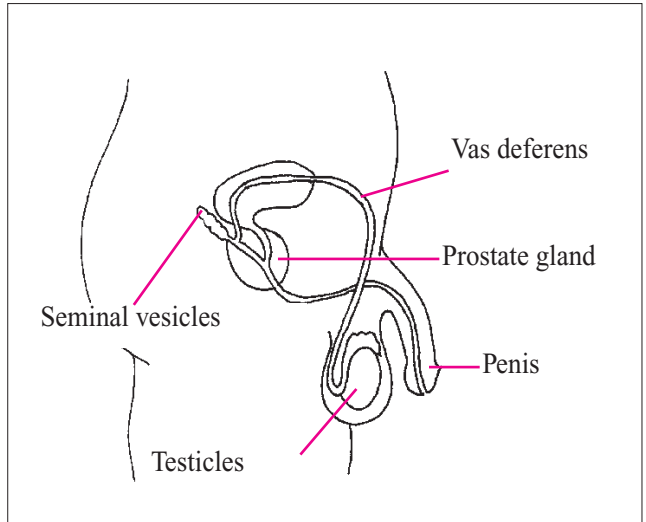
During periods...

... you can take baths, showers and wash your hair. You can also have exercise and go swimming with tampons.

Male genital organs



The outer part of the male genital organs (sex) are the penis and two testicles. The inner parts are the vas deferens, the prostate gland and the seminal vesicles.



The testicles...

...have two functions:

- ◆ Constant production of spermatozoa from puberty until death.
- ◆ Production of male hormone.

From each testicle the vas deferens carry the spermatozoa to the penis.

The penis...

... allows the passage of urine and sperm. With sexual excitement, it becomes rigid. This erection is caused by a flow of blood and it permits the penetration of the penis into the vagina.

The sperm...

...is constituted of spermatozoa and a liquid produced by the prostate and the seminal vesicles. Ejaculation is when sperm spurts out of the penis.

Important!

During erection and before ejaculation, the penis discharges a liquid that may contain spermatozoa. Withdrawing before ejaculation will therefore not keep you from getting pregnant. For the same reason, if you use condoms, they must be put on before any contact between the vulva and the penis.

Contraception

There is no perfect method of contraception. Therefore it is important that you choose a method which is convenient to you and which corresponds to your needs. In this booklet, you find a short presentation of different methods available in Switzerland, their prices, effectiveness and how or where you can get them. You will get further information in a family planning center (free) or at your doctor's. Do not hesitate to write down all the questions you have and take an appointment.

Vaginal ring

It is a flexible ring which is fitted in the vagina and contains two hormones similar to those produced by women.

- ◆ The ring is placed on the first day of the period and removed 3 weeks later on the same day.
- ◆ Periods come during the break and contraception is guaranteed all the time.
- ◆ Insert a new ring after 7 days
- ◆ Important! The break must never be longer than 7 days!

Where to find it ? At any drugstore, with a medical prescription.

Price : Between 21.- and 25.-

The trans-dermique patch

It is a hormonal contraceptive containing two hormones similar to those produced by women. It is a set of 3 patches which are stuck on the skin, one patch per week.

- ◆ After 3 weeks, take off the patch; periods come during the break and contraception is guaranteed all the time.
- ◆ Stick on a new patch after 7 days
- ◆ Important! The break must never be longer than 7 days!

Where to find it ? At any drugstore, with a medical prescription.

Price : Between 21.- and 25.-

Oestroprogestative Pill

The pill is a hormonal contraceptive. Taken everyday and at the same time of the day it is very reliable. If you forget it for more than 12 hours after the moment you are supposed to take it, its contraceptive effect is no more guaranteed.

- ◆ Usually taken with a break of 6 to 7 days after 21 or 22 pills. (Some pills are taken without a break.) Periods come during the break and contraception is guaranteed all along.
- ◆ Important! The break must not go on more than is prescribed.

Where to find it ? At any drugstore, with a medical prescription.

Price : Between 12.- and 20.-

Progestative Pill

- ◆ There is no monthly break: at the end of the pack you go on directly with the next one, even in case of bleeding.
- ◆ The monthly period may disappear, shorten or become irregular.
- ◆ It can be taken during breastfeeding.
- ◆ If you forget the pill for more than 12 hours, contraception is no longer guaranteed.

Where to find it ? At any drugstore, with a medical prescription.

Price : 15.- per monthly course

Intra-uterus device IUD

IUD is a small plastic device about 2,5 to 3,5 cm long, either with a copper thread rolled around it or containing a progestative hormone. It is fitted inside the uterus by a doctor. It has a nylon thread attached to it with which the doctor can take the IUD out.

- ◆ The progestative IUD is changed every 5 years
- ◆ The copper IUD is changed every 3 or 5 or 8 years
- ◆ They are usually proposed to women who have already undergone pregnancy
- ◆ See your doctor in case of any abnormalities, infection, pain or missed periods
- ◆ IUD are fitted or removed in the course of a gynecological consultation.

Where to find it ? At any drugstore, with a medical prescription.

Price : 80. - to 250. - plus the fitting.

Contraceptive injection

The 3-month contraceptive injection (or Depo-Provera) is injected every 12 weeks in a medical service.

- ◆ Contraceptive injections can sometimes cause irregular bleeding which can reduce or often completely stop the monthly period.
- ◆ Usually, when you stop Depo Provera, monthly periods come back and you can become pregnant again but it is possible that you have to wait a few months to recover both periods and fecundity.

Where to find it ? At any drugstore, with a medical prescription.

Price : 35.- for the Depo-Provera, without the injection.

Hormonal implant

The under-skin implant is placed and withdrawn by the gynecologist under a local anesthetic. It is efficient during 3 years and efficiency starts 8 hours after intervention.

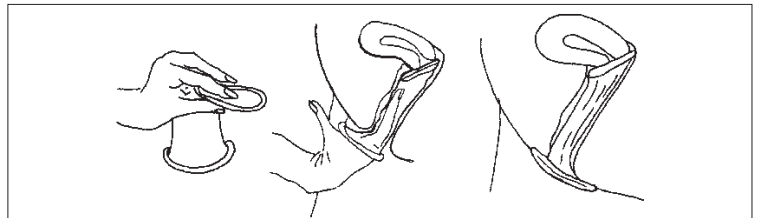
- ◆ It is a short plastic stick containing a progestative hormone. It is placed under the inner part of the arm.
- ◆ The implant can provoke irregular periodical bleedings or stop them completely.
- ◆ Return to fertility is in principal immediate after the removal of the implant.

Where to find it ? At any drugstore, with a medical prescription

Price : 330. - for the implant, plus fitting and removal by the gynecologist.

Female condom

The female condom or Femidom is a thin membrane which you place in the inner side of the vagina. It can be placed a few hours before the sexual relation. To be used for each sexual relation and put before penetration.



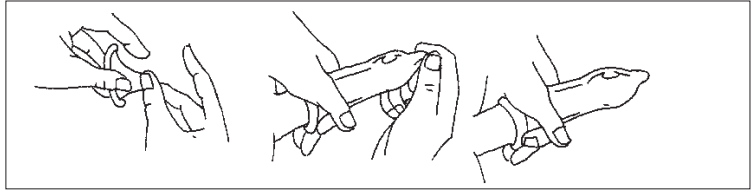
Where to find it ? Femidom can be easily bought at any drugstore or supermarket.

Price : About 10 fr. for 3.

Male condom

Several sizes and models exist. Only those which have the “OK”, “CE”, “MD” or “NF” symbol are safe. This method requires the cooperation of your partner.

- ◆ Insist on using it for all sexual intercourse and even when you have your periods.
- ◆ If it splits, slips or remains in the vagina, ask for an **emergency contraception** to avoid becoming pregnant.
- ◆ For persons suffering an allergy to latex, polyurethane condoms exist.



Where to find them ? At any drugstore or supermarket, without medical prescription.

Price : Between 0.50 to 2.-. each.

Male and female condoms are the only contraceptive devices which protect against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

Emergency contraception

Also known as “the morning after pill”. It is an emergency method and must be taken whenever pregnancy is not desired.

- ◆ If the condom splits or slips
- ◆ If you have forgotten the pill after a sexual intercourse
- ◆ After an unprotected sexual relation , including rape
- ◆ After using unreliable contraception methods.

It has to be taken as soon as possible, at the latest within 72 hours (3 days) after having unprotected sex.

Where to find it ? At any drugstore without a medical prescription, for people over 16 years old. You can also ask for help at the emergency service at the hospital, from your doctor or at the family planning center.

Price : Between 12. - and 30.-

Benzalkonium Spermicides

Spermicide is a chemical product which destroys spermatozoa. It is placed at the bottom of the vagina before a sexual relation. Spermicide only works on contact.

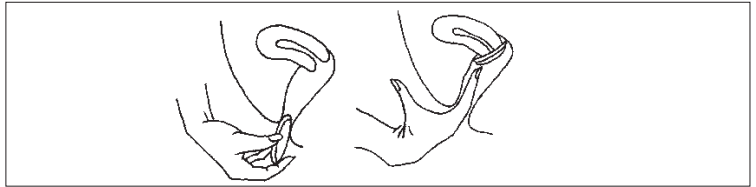
The spermicide exists only as a tampon. Read the instructions on the packet.

Where to find it ? At any drugstore, without prescription.

Price : About 30. - the pack of 6 tampons.

Diaphragm and cap

It is a circular dome made of soft rubber with a flexible rim. You can put it yourself, making sure it covers your cervix. It must always be used with a spermicide.



Where to find it ? A medical consultation is necessary to determine which size of diaphragm and to learn how to insert it. It can be bought at any drugstore and used until it starts to wear.

Price : Between 30. - and 50. - each diaphragm.

Self-examination method

This method is based on women's observation of the signs that accompany the fecund as well as the unproductive times of women's cycles.

On fecund periods, you can either not have sexual relations or use a barrier contraceptive.

To become familiar with this method both partners need to be motivated and to collaborate.

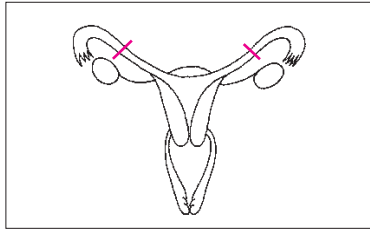
Ligature of the Fallopian tubes

(sterilization for women)

Vasectomy

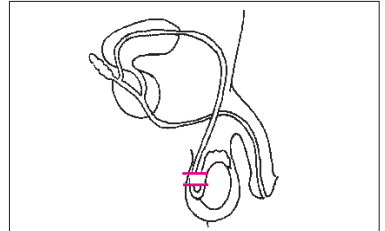
(sterilisation for men)

Ligature of the Fallopian tubes and vasectomy are the only irreversible methods. These methods are very sure. It is the most reliable method and is advised to couples who have decided not to have any more children. Advice and information are available in family planning centers for couples considering this method of contraception.



- ◆ Female sterilization. The cycles follow up and women have their normal monthly period. Women's sexual life does not change.
- ◆ Male sterilization.

The vasectomy does not change the quality of intercourse, erection, orgasm and ejaculation. For a few weeks after the sterilization a safe method of contraception should be used, until the sperm no longer contains spermatozoa.



Where to obtain a ligature of the Fallopian tubes or a vasectomy?

For women : This is a surgical intervention performed by a surgeon or a gynecologist and therefore hospitalization is necessary.
For men: It is performed in a outpatient sector by a urologist or a surgeon.

Price : A ligature of the Fallopian tubes or a vasectomy are not covered by the basic health insurance. The process for men is simpler and less expensive. Ask your doctor's advice.

Unreliable methods

If you want to avoid becoming pregnant,
Do not use the following methods.
They are unreliable methods.

Calculating or Ogino-Knauss method...

... is not a very reliable method as a woman's body is not a clock, and therefore ovulation can be delayed by sickness, emotional shock and tiredness.

Withdrawal method...

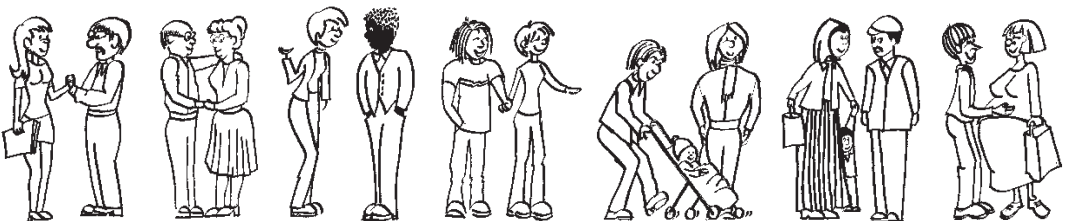
... is not a very safe method as the man may not be able to withdraw at the right moment and because a secretion containing spermatozoa is possible before ejaculation.

Spermicide ...

... a spermicide used by itself is not sure because its efficiency is limited. It must always be used with a condom or a diaphragm.

Douching or vaginal shower...

... is not a very safe method as the spermatozoa are very fast and can enter the uterus in a matter of seconds.



Questions - Answers

«Can I get pregnant when I stop contraception?»

Ligature of the Fallopian tubes and vasectomy are the only irreversible methods.

After the 3-month hormonal injection, return of fertility happens after about 5 months, but can sometimes take more than one year.

What is efficiency of the different methods?

No method is 100 percent efficient but **efficiency depends on the correct use** of the contraceptive. Inform yourself precisely and follow the indications.

- ✓ **Safest methods:** women' ligature of the Fallopian tubes and men' vasectomy, the 3-month hormonal injection Depo-Provera, IUD with progestative hormone, the hormonal implant
- ✓ **Very safe methods:** the pill, IUD with copper thread, the minipill
- ✓ **Less safe methods:** male and female condom, diaphragm, benzalkonium spermicide

Not very safe methods: symptothermal method

«Which contraceptive should I use while breast-feeding?»

After delivery, ovulation may occur, therefore you can become pregnant straight after childbirth and before the return of your periods.

If you do not want another pregnancy immediately use a contraception!

The following contraceptive methods do not reduce the flow of milk and are not dangerous for the infant.

- ◆ The condom
- ◆ The progestative pill ("minipill")
- ◆ The contraceptive injection «Depo Provera»
- ◆ Six weeks after the birth, IUD with copper thread or with progestative hormone, or the hormonal implant
- ◆ Benzalkonium spermicide

Your rights

Independently of your nationality and your legal status, you have the right to be informed and taken care of. You have the right to understand all the explanations given by doctors. Do not hesitate to ask questions and if necessary to write them down before your appointments. If you have difficulties expressing yourself or understanding, you can take someone to translate along with you. Certain services work with interpreters, inform yourself.

You can be accompanied by a family member or a friend in all your visits at the doctor's or at the family planning center.

For women who have sexual relationships, it is advised to have yearly gynecological check ups. If you don't want to go to a male gynecologist you certainly can find a female one in your region.

For contraception, it is up to you to find a suitable method and to change it according to the course of your life and your beliefs.

In Switzerland one is obliged to have a health insurance. For foreigners without a residence permit, it is also possible to get a health insurance.

If you have a health insurance... ... the following charges are undertaken:

- ✓ **Consultations:** All medical and gynecological visits will be refunded with the exception of deductible amounts and your participation in charges.
- ✓ **Maternity:** All visits to your gynecologist during pregnancy, 7 visits to the midwife, delivery charges, all the controls done by the midwife during 10 days after delivery and 3 breast-feeding consultations are fully refunded by the health insurance with the exception of deductible amounts and your participation in charges.
- ✓ **Termination of pregnancy (abortion):** All charges undertaken for a pregnancy termination are refunded by the health insurance with the exception of deductible amounts and your participation in charges.

Contraceptives: All contraceptives (condoms, pills, IUD, etc) are at your expense.

Any women having had a professional activity for at least 9 months before the childbirth, is in benefit of a maternity allowance. The amount represents the 80% of the last salary and is paid during 14 weeks.

If you do not have a health insurance... ... enquire about the medical treatment that you will have to pay. In case of difficulties, you can refer to social services.

Benefits allowed in case of necessity: In some cantons, mothers or parents in need are entitled to benefits. Get in touch with either family planning centers, Pregnancy consultation centers or social services.

Sexually transmitted infections

What are sexually transmitted infections?

- ◆ These infections are mostly transmitted during sexual intercourse from one partner to the other. They can affect the genital organs as well as the other parts of the body.
- ◆ Used properly, condoms provide a very effective barrier against most sexually transmitted infections.
- ◆ Not treating infections or delaying treatment can have harmful consequences on your health and fecundity. For most of them efficient treatments exist.

Types of sexually transmitted infections

There are many types of sexually transmitted infections.

- ◆ Genital warts, Chlamydia, genital herpes, Gonorrhoea (or the clap), *Trichomonas vaginalis* (TV), Syphilis (the pox), HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), genital herpes, hepatitis, crab lice, scabies...

How to avoid sexually transmitted infections?

If any one of the above infections are diagnosed by your doctor, it is important to advise your sexual partner(s). A medical check up is necessary even if he (or she) has no symptoms.

Avoid sexual intercourse until the end of your treatment.

To avoid HIV transmission, follow SAFER SEX rules given in this booklet.

Men and women can have different symptoms sometimes very discreet, or even no symptoms at all.

If you observe the following symptoms immediately go to your doctor or to a health clinic, a family planning or a HIV consultation center.

Women

- ◆ Spots, warts, rashes, sores blisters or pain in the genital area.
- ◆ An unusually thick or watery, cloudy or smelly discharge from the vagina.
- ◆ A pain or burning sensation when you pass urine.
- ◆ Abnormal bleeding apart from the monthly period.
- ◆ Pelvic pain which is not related to the monthly period.

Men

- ◆ Spots, warts, rashes, sores, blisters or pain in the genital area.
- ◆ A pain or burning sensation when you pass urine.
- ◆ A discharge from the penis.

Insist on using a condom

- ◆ if you change partners
- ◆ if you have several partners

whatever the method you use.



HIV

Aids is caused by HIV virus. It weakens the body's immunity system and its resistance to infections or other diseases. There is yet no vaccine and actual treatments don't totally eradicate the virus. Prevention is the only mean to protect yourself from HIV.

How is HIV transmitted?

- ◆ By sexual intercourse (vaginal, anal or oral) without a condom with someone who has HIV.
- ◆ By using needles infected with HIV.
- ◆ During pregnancy, at birth and while breastfeeding, a seropositive mother can infect her baby.
- ◆ By transfusion of infected blood or by blood products. Today in Switzerland there is almost no risk.

How to avoid a HIV infection?

By following the rules of SAFER SEX:

- ◆ Insist on the use of condom for every vaginal or anal sex.
- ◆ Avoid cunnilingus (stimulation of the vulva by mouth and tongue) during the monthly period.
- ◆ Avoid semen in the mouth and do not swallow it.

For those who inject drugs, always use your own material and never re-use it.

Warning !

Don't forget that anybody can be an HIV carrier no matter how much you know this person or whatever his/her well-to-do appearances.

How to detect a HIV infection?

You can pass a test 3 months after the last unprotected sexual relation. You do not have to be referred by your GP for the test. Certain centers propose anonymous tests. You can also pass it at your GP, at an Aids unit, at hospitals, and at certain family planning centers.

A test now exists called the “rapid-answer test”. It has to be made 3 months after the last unprotected or badly protected sexual relation.

The price of the test varies between 30.- fr. to 90.- fr.

You pay for the anonymous test, other tests can be refunded by health insurance.



Muammer Kotbaş / AIDS Savaşım Derneği / İstanbul

Male and female condoms protect you from HIV and sexually transmitted infections.

Condom on the male side

Put it on before penetration. Take the condom out of the pack carefully. Do not use your teeth. Watch out for rings and sharp finger nails which can split the condom. Hold the condom by the reservoir tip between your thumb and forefinger. No air should be trapped in the tip.

Now place the condom over the penis head so that it can be rolled down the penis.

Use only the lubricants for condoms (without fat or oil). Never use body lotion, massage oil or vaseline.

After ejaculation, the man must withdraw from the vagina before he loses his erection.

Do not expose condoms to heat, sun and do not keep them in a wallet.

Use a new condom everytime you have sex and never re-use it.

Pregnancy

If your periods are late and you think you could be pregnant you can use a **pregnancy test** just after a few day of delay. The test detects if urine contains pregnancy hormone. You can buy a test kit at the drugstore or super market, and do it yourself at home or have it done at your GP or at certain family planning centers.

During pregnancy

...

... it is better to have regular controls at the gynecologist or by a midwife.

You can get more information from a midwife on pregnancy, nutrition, delivery. She will also give you the necessary advices on baby care, breast-feeding and baby nutrition. She will also visit both you and your baby at home.

You can also prepare for childbirth by attending classes. These courses can be taken in group with other future parents.

Certain drugs are not suitable for pregnant women. Find out from your GP. Alcohol and smoking are harmful for the baby during pregnancy and while breast feeding.

You can have sex...

... while pregnant if there is no complications. In case of any doubts talk to your midwife or your GP. Good communication between you and your partner is the key to a harmonious pregnancy and will help you to adapt your sexual life to the development of your pregnancy.



Questions ?

If you have any **questions or problems during your pregnancy** concerning your job, insurance, health, family life, money, etc get in touch with a family planning center or Pregnancy consultation center. You will be heard and advised in a discrete and confidential manner. The consultations are free.

If your pregnancy is unintended...

... and you are thinking of an abortion (termination of pregnancy) talk to a trustworthy person without any delay. Many women have faced this decision of whether keep on pregnancy or interrupt it. Family planning centers will inform you and answer all your queries. Further information is available on this subject in the following chapter.



Termination of pregnancy (abortion)

Under Swiss law, all pregnant women can obtain a medical pregnancy interruption, which must take place within 12 weeks following the beginning of the last monthly periods. If you consider interrupting your pregnancy, you should rapidly make an appointment with a doctor or at a family planning center. You will have to confirm your decision by signing a written query for termination of pregnancy saying that you are in distress.

If you are pregnant and cannot or do not desire to go on with the pregnancy, contact a family planning center or your GP with no further delay.

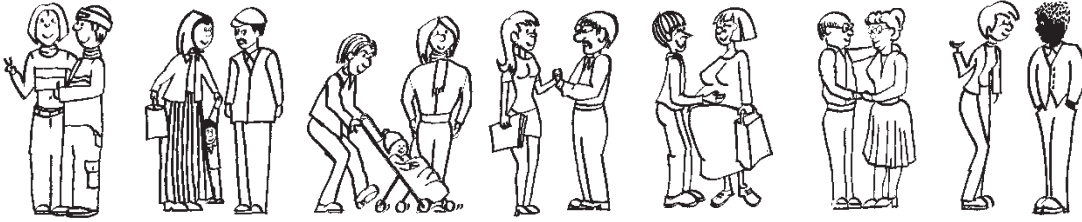
Hospitalization varies from 1 to 3 days. For early pregnancy, certain medical cabinets, hospital centers or health clinics perform the intervention without hospitalization.

Where to get information and help? In a Pregnancy advisory service, or a family planning center. You will find professional advice by people who are there to help you, listen to you, support you and give you the necessary information, all which are free.

How does it go? The pregnancy interruption is performed in hospital or at a doctor's. It can be done in an outpatient sector. The surgical method by aspiration is the most common one. A drug method exists and can be taken within the first 7 weeks of pregnancy (outpatient treatment of Mifégyne and prostaglandin followed by several medical check-ups).

How much does it cost? The termination of pregnancy (abortion) is a medical act and therefore the charges are undertaken by the insurance companies. If you do not have an insurance, consult a pregnancy advisory service, family planning center or the hospital's social service.

Impressum



Impressum

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Kroatisch	Partnerstvo, Kontracepcija, HIV...
Portugiesisch	Casal, Contrcepção, HIV...
Tamil	தாம்பத்தியம், கருத்தடைமுறைகள்...
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