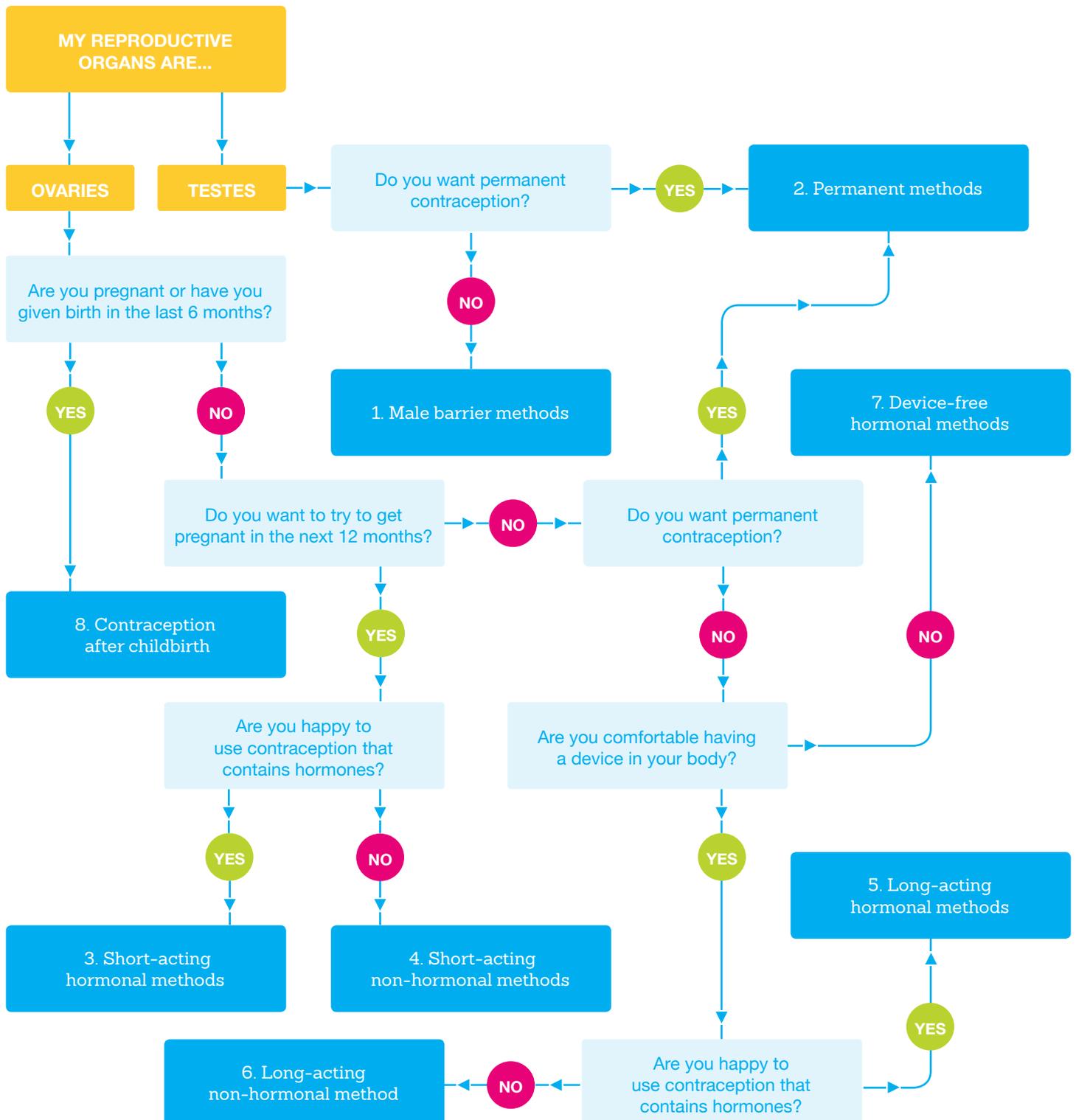


Contraception match maker



Confused about all the methods out there? Find your perfect match then read more detailed explanations of methods that suit you best overleaf.



Meet your contraceptive match



1. Male barrier methods

Sadly there aren't a lot of options available for men who are looking to take responsibility for contraception. The only short-term method for men is the male condom. On the plus side though, male condoms are also your best protection against STIs and are available pretty much everywhere.

2. Permanent methods

Deciding that you don't want to have any/more children is an important life step, but once you've made it you then need to decide how you're going to prevent pregnancy in the future. If you're certain about your decision, permanent contraception options can provide great peace of mind. Despite requiring minor surgery, they are incredibly effective. Permanent contraception won't affect your sex drive, sex life, or sexual function and means that you can relax for the rest of your life - well, at least when it comes to preventing unplanned pregnancy. The two options available are Tubal Ligation (aka getting your tubes tied), or a Vasectomy, which involves a small procedure to re-route your sperm.

3. Short-acting hormonal methods

Even though you're planning on becoming pregnant, that doesn't mean you're ready right this second; so it's important to find a reliable contraception option that will tide you over until you're prepared. These short term methods use different types of hormones in different quantities, but they are all completely reversible as soon as you stop using them. The use of hormones also makes them more effective than their non-hormonal counterparts, giving you greater peace of mind. The two combined hormonal methods are the Pill and the Vaginal Ring, which use oestrogen and progesterone. The Mini Pill only uses progesterone which means it's safe to use when breastfeeding straight after you've given birth.

4. Short-acting non-hormonal methods

When it comes to planning a pregnancy, timing is important. So it's understandable that you want to ensure you've got a method to tide you over until you're ready to start trying. Short-acting, hormone-free methods may be less effective than longer term or hormonal options, but if you're only planning on using them for a short time and the idea of an unexpected pregnancy isn't the worst news, then they're ideal! These methods are: Male and Female Condoms, Diaphragms, Fertility Awareness and the Withdrawal Method, but these are considerably less effective than Male Condoms.

5. Long-acting hormonal methods

No need to take tablets, check your calendar or stock up on condoms; these options will keep you covered for between 3 months to 5 years! They all contain progesterone, which means they may also help to manage heavy periods, cramps and discomfort, while being very effective at preventing pregnancy. If you're a bit over taking a pill

every day, but not looking to have children in the next 12-18 months, the Contraceptive Injection, which provides protection for 3 months at a time, might be the one for you. In the market for something that lasts longer? The Contraceptive Implant slowly releases progesterone via a discrete matchstick sized implant in your arm and lasts 3 years. It can be removed at any time, and your fertility will return straight away.

Want even more protection? The Hormonal IUD lasts 5 years and is considered more effective than getting your tubes tied, but has the advantage of being completely reversible. It slowly releases progesterone directly into the uterus, which is why this method is considered to have fewer side effects than other progesterone delivery methods. It can be removed at any time with fertility returning immediately.

6. Long-acting non-hormonal method

If you're after a highly effective non-hormonal option that will last longer than a few months, and that doesn't require you to keep track of pills, calendars or condom stocks, then you can't do much better than the Copper IUD. It lasts from five to ten years depending on which kind you get, and contains zero hormones, which means if you're concerned about hormone based side effects, you can rest easy.

7. Device-free hormonal methods

Hormonal contraception can provide relief from menstruation symptoms as well as preventing pregnancy. However, not all of us are looking to have a long-term option requiring a device to be inserted, even if it means a little more work on your part to make sure you're still as protected as you can be. The good news is, there are a number of options available that provide hormonal contraception without a device that are highly effective as long as you stick to the program. The Pill and the Vaginal Ring are better known, using oestrogen and progesterone to prevent pregnancy and provide period control. Less well known are the Contraceptive Injection and The Mini Pill, which are progesterone only options, with the injection being effective for 3 months.

8. Contraception after childbirth

Firstly, congratulations on the new addition to your family!!! Perhaps a remote consideration when you're pregnant or just after having a baby, fertility can return as early as 3 weeks after giving birth, so it's important to consider your options ahead of time, even if you're breastfeeding. While lactational amenorrhoea (breastfeeding and no periods) is more than 98% effective at preventing pregnancy, it's only this effective if it's been less than 6 months since birth, your periods haven't returned and you're breastfeeding day and night in regular intervals.

You can find detailed information on each method, including guidelines on when it's safe to start using contraception after giving birth at contraception.org.au