

## Birth Control (Contraceptive) Options for Frum Women

|   | <b>EFFECTIVENESS</b><br>(How well does it work?) | <b>OK to use while BREASTFEEDING?</b>  | <b>HOW OFTEN</b> do you take it?<br>How long does it last?   | <b>CYCLE CHANGES?</b><br><b>SPOTTING?</b>  | <b>WHERE</b> does it go?     | <b>PRESCRIPTION</b> needed?    | Other Concerns  |
|---|--|--|--|--|------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Combined</b><br>(Estrogen + Progesterone)<br><b>Oral Contraceptive Pills</b><br>[OCPs] | 99% with perfect use                             | Not recommended; Decreases quality and quantity of milk; May have less of an impact between 6-12 months. | Taken <b>daily</b> , around the same time. Period every month to 3 months, depending on timing of "off days" or placebo pills.                                 | Overrides natural hormones, so spotting is common in the beginning until the body adjusts. Cycle length depends on dosing. | Taken by mouth               | Yes, except in a few US states | Can help treat conditions such as PCOS, PMS, acne, and anemia, among others. Not safe with certain clotting disorders and other medical conditions because of the estrogen. |
| <b>Progesterone Only Pills</b><br>[POPs]  | 99% with perfect use (which is hard to achieve!) | Yes. Breastfeeding increases effectiveness.  | <b>Daily</b> – at the same time every day. Preferably mid-day for most women. Effects only last 22 hrs, and it takes 3-4 hrs to have an impact. No "off days". | Increase in spotting. 10% of women have no period while taking POPs, especially if they're punctual.                       | Taken by mouth               | Yes                            | European POPs (also used in Israel) are different and sometimes more effective than the one used in the US. Being late by 3 hrs is considered missing a day.                |
| <b>Nuvaring</b>   | 99% with perfect use                             | Same as OCPs   | Inserted <b>monthly</b> . Lasts up to 1 month per ring. Periods do not need to be scheduled monthly.   | Less spotting than with other OCPs or patch. Sometimes a period will last longer than the off week.                        | Placed in the vagina at home | Yes                            | Does not need to be removed for intercourse.  |
| <b>Patch</b>  | 99% with perfect use                             | Same as OCPs   | Patch is changed <b>weekly</b> , left off for period week.   | Same as OCP  | Applied to skin              | Yes                            | Much less effective in women over 198 lb/90 kg.   |

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|------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|--|----------------------|--|--|
| <b>Depo Provera Shot</b>           | 99% with perfect use   | Can be used from 6 weeks post birth | Given <b>every 3 months</b>  | Every woman's cycle changes!<br>Irregular bleeding for 6 months, followed by decreased bleeding.<br>50% of women have no period by 1 year; 80% by 5 years. | Shot                 | Yes, usually given in doctor's office                                  | Long acting even after last dose, for established users! (Average of 10 months to return to fertility.)<br>Significant weight gain associated with this method.<br>Calcium supplement should be taken. |
| <b>Copper IUD</b>                  | 99% with perfect use   | Yes                                 | Inserted <b>once</b> . Lasts up to <b>10 yrs</b> .<br>(For Paragard in the US) | Some spotting from insertion.<br>No change in cycles.<br>Heavier periods.  | Uterus (Thru cervix) | Yes, inserted in the office  | Completely non-hormonal.<br>Can cause increased pain with periods.<br>Not recommended for women with heavy periods or chronic anemia.  |
| <b>Hormonal (Progesterone) IUD</b> | 99% with perfect use   | Yes                                 | Inserted <b>once</b> . Lasts <b>3-7 years</b> , depending on brand/dose.       | Yes! Most women have 3-6 months of spotting, followed by much less bleeding. With some brands, no period at all is normal by the end of 1 year.            | Uterus (Thru cervix) | Yes, inserted in the office  | Mostly localized hormones. Some women will have systemic side effects, usually mild.<br>Recommended for women with heavy periods.  |
| <b>Implant</b>                     | ~100%  | Yes                                 | Implanted <b>once</b> . Lasts <b>3+ years</b> .                                | Irregular bleeding very common. Additional hormones sometimes added for 1-3 months to regulate cycle.  | Under skin of arm    | Yes, inserted and removed in the office by specially trained providers | Long acting option for women who cannot receive/keep an IUD in place.  |
| <b>Diaphragm</b>                   | ~80-90% with perfect use, which includes use with spermicide | Yes                                 | Used only with relations   | Does not impact cycle.   | Vagina               | Options available with and without prescription.                       | More effective when used with spermicide.<br>Can increase UTIs.<br><u>Psak on permissibility varies, even for those</u>  |

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|   |   |  |   |  |                   | Inserted and removed at home as needed.   | <u>with a heter for birth control! Consult your Rav.</u>   |
| <b>Spermicide</b>                                     | 70-80% with perfect use                                 | Yes  | Used only with relations                          | Does not impact cycle.   | Vagina            | Prescription not needed. Different types available in US and Israel pharmacies. | Long term use can irritate an ectropion/highly sensitive cervix and cause spotting.  |
| <b>Sterilization</b><br>"Tying Tubes"                 | 99%   | Yes  | One-time procedure. Considered <b>permanent</b> . | Does not impact cycle.   | Pelvic, internal. | Small surgery, most often done within a couple days of birth or with c-section. | For someone BRCA 1 (+), some forms of this procedure can significantly reduce chances of Ovarian Cancer.<br><u>Psak on permissibility varies, even for those with a heter for birth control! Consult your Rav.</u> |
| <b>Lactational Amenorrhea</b><br>[LAM, Breastfeeding] | 97-99% effective up to 6 months if certain criteria met | Yes, full or nearly full breastfeeding necessary | Return to fertility varies                        | LAM = no period. Period often irregular/unpredictable when it returns. | N/A               | N/A   | No <i>halachic shaylah</i> needs to be asked. Nursing encouraged up to 2 years even with a delay in return to fertility.   |

Primary source: [Managing Contraception 2016](#)

Zeiman M, Hatcher RA, Allen A. Z. Lathrop E, Haddad L, *Managing Contraception 2016*. Tiger, Georgia: Bridging the Gap Foundation, 2016

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