

## Birth Control (Contraceptive) Options for Frum Women

	<b>EFFECTIVENESS</b> (How well does it work?)	OK to use while <b>BREASTFEEDING?</b>	<b>HOW OFTEN</b> do you take it? How long does it last?	<b>CYCLE CHANGES?</b> <b>SPOTTING?</b>	<b>WHERE</b> does it go?	<b>PRESCRIPTION</b> needed?	Other Concerns
<b>Combined</b> (Estrogen + Progesterone) <b>Oral Contraceptive Pills</b> [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> [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! Irregular bleeding for 6 months, followed by decreased bleeding. 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.) Significant weight gain associated with this method. 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> . (For Paragard in the US)	Some spotting from insertion. No change in cycles. Heavier periods.	Uterus (Thru cervix)	Yes, inserted in the office	Completely non-hormonal. Can caused increased pain with periods. 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. 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. Can increase UTIs. <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> "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. <u>Psak on permissibility varies, even for those with a heter for birth control! Consult your Rav.</u>
<b>Lactational Amenorrhea</b> [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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