

How to Switch Birth Control Methods

No Gaps

What's the best way to switch from one birth control method to another? To lower the chance of getting pregnant, avoid a gap between methods. Go straight from one method to the next, with no gaps between methods.

Do not wait for a period before you stop the old method or start the new one.

Overlap Method

In some cases, you should have a few days of **overlap** – this means starting the new method before stopping the old method. This gives the new method time to start working before the old one wears off. The chart below explains which methods should overlap. It also explains how long the overlap should be. The overlap length appears in **bold** print.

Back-up Method

If you prefer not to overlap the old method and the new method, you can use a back-up method instead. Back-up methods include condoms and spermicide. For example, if you don't want to keep taking the pill after you get your first progestin shot, you can use condoms instead. You should use the back-up method for the same number of days listed in **bold** print in the chart on the reverse side.

To prevent HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), always use condoms.

Safe Switching Method

Not sure how to use the chart on the other side of this sheet? Do this: safely switch from one type of birth control to another by going straight from one method to the next one – **no gap!** – and use condoms or spermicide for the first 7 days.








Pill Packs

One note about switching **from** pills: you don't need to finish the birth control pill pack before switching. You can stop taking your pill at any point in the pack. If you are switching **to** pills, you should start by taking the first pill in the pack.

You may have changes in your period after switching. This is normal and safe.

Switching to:

Switching from:

	Pill	Patch	Ring	Progestin shot ("Depo")	Progestin implant	Hormone IUD	Copper IUD
Pill 	No gap: take 1st pill of new pack the day after taking any pill in old pack	Start patch 1 day before stopping pill	No gap: insert ring the day after taking any pill in pack	First shot 7 days before stopping pill	Insert implant 4 days before stopping pill	Insert hormone IUD 7 days before stopping pill	Can insert copper IUD <i>up to 5 days after</i> stopping pill
Patch 	Start pill 1 day before stopping patch		No gap: insert ring and remove patch on the same day	First shot 7 days before stopping patch	Insert implant 4 days before stopping patch	Insert hormone IUD 7 days before stopping patch	Can insert copper IUD <i>up to 5 days after</i> stopping patch
Ring 	Start pill 1 day before stopping ring	Start patch 2 days before stopping ring		First shot 7 days before stopping ring	Insert implant 4 days before stopping ring	Insert hormone IUD 7 days before stopping ring	Can insert copper IUD <i>up to 5 days after</i> stopping ring
Progestin shot ("Depo") 	Can take 1st pill <i>up to 15 weeks after</i> the last shot	Can start patch <i>up to 15 weeks after</i> the last shot	Can insert ring <i>up to 15 weeks after</i> the last shot		Can insert implant <i>up to 15 weeks after</i> the last shot	Can insert hormone IUD <i>up to 15 weeks after</i> the last shot	Can insert copper IUD <i>up to 16 weeks after</i> the last shot
Progestin implant 	Start pill 7 days before implant is removed	Start patch 7 days before implant is removed	Start ring 7 days before implant is removed	First shot 7 days before implant is removed		Insert hormone IUD 7 days before implant is removed	Can insert copper IUD <i>up to 5 days after</i> implant is removed
Hormone IUD 	Start pill 7 days before IUD is removed	Start patch 7 days before IUD is removed	Start ring 7 days before IUD is removed	First shot 7 days before IUD is removed	Insert implant 4 days before IUD is removed		Can insert copper IUD <i>right after</i> hormone IUD is removed
Copper IUD 	Start pill 7 days before IUD is removed	Start patch 7 days before IUD is removed	Start ring 7 days before IUD is removed	First shot 7 days before IUD is removed	Insert implant 4 days before IUD is removed	Insert hormone IUD <i>right after</i> copper IUD is removed and use back-up method for 7 days	