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Strategies to Improve the Care of MS in Women

Contraception

OVERVIEW

Despite the availability of effective birth control, approximately half of pregnancies are unplanned. Your neurologist or other health care provider can help you choose the method of birth control that best matches your preferences and lifestyle. Listed below are the major contraceptive options. The effectiveness numbers assume ideal use, but if the methods are not used as directed they will not work as well.

Category	Method		Ideal Effectiveness	Typical Use Effectiveness
Highly Effective	Permanent	Male: vasectomy	99.9%	99.9%
		Female: tubal ligation	99.5%	99.5%
	Reversible	Intrauterine device (IUD)	99.8%	99.8%
		Hormonal implant	99.95%	99.95%
Effective	Combined hormone pill, ring, or patch		99.7%	91%
	Progestin-only injection every 3 months		99.8%	94%
	Diaphragm with spermicide		94%	88%
Less Effective	Condoms		98%	82%
	Spermicide		82%	72%
	Sponge		80%	76%

RELEVANCE FOR MS

Many patients with MS are taking medications that should be avoided in pregnancy. These include both disease modifying therapies (DMTs) for MS as well as various medications for symptoms. Some of the symptomatic medications such as those used to treat pain (eg, seizure medications) and fatigue may make oral birth control agents less effective. Therefore, all medications you take should be discussed with your health care provider. There is no evidence to support that contraceptive agents affect MS either positively or negatively.

ABOUT YOU

Which statements describe you? (*check all that apply*)

I am taking (or planning to begin) a DMT for MS

Which one? _____

I am planning to become pregnant

I am currently using contraception

Which form? _____



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ABOUT YOU

I am taking other medications on a regular basis

Which one(s)? _____

Which statement(s) describe your sexual activity?

I am very conscientious about my contraception

I am usually conscientious about my contraception

I only have occasional sex

I value spontaneity

RESOURCES

National MS Society. Talking About Reproductive Issues:

<http://www.nationalmssociety.org/NationalMSSociety/media/MSNationalFiles/Brochures/Talking-about-reproductive-issuesetc.gov/reproductivehealth/unintendedpregnancy/contraception.htm>