

# Abstinence

## How:

You decide not to have sex. Choose a partner who has made the same choice. Talk about sex activities you want and those you don't want.

## When:

At any time in your life you may decide not to have sex. If you change your mind, you can choose another birth control method to keep from getting pregnant. Learn about birth control.

## Where:

Always keep condoms and emergency contraceptive (EC) pills on hand.

## Advantages:

Abstinence is free, always available, and protects you from pregnancy and HIV/STDs.

## Disadvantages:

Abstinence will not protect you if you change your mind and have sex. You need to know about birth control and always keep condoms with you.

## Side effects:

People may find it hard not to have sex for a long time. People may feel pressured by partners, friends or society to have sex.



## Risks:

Oral and anal sex may keep you from getting pregnant, but you can still get STDs. You can lose your judgment if you drink or use drugs. If you have sex without birth control, take emergency contraceptive pills as soon as possible, within 5 days (120 hours).

## Effectiveness:

As long as you remain abstinent, it is 100% effective.