This booklet, which was designed with the help of youth peer educators, is for youth groups and friends to share. Read it and learn about reproductive health—for now and as you journey into adult life.
One important part of planning for your future is deciding if and when to have children and how many to have (known as “family planning”).

These are some of the most important decisions you will make in your life, but you want to take time and be sure to make the choices that will help you achieve your dreams.

Avoiding pregnancy (or avoiding causing a pregnancy) before you are ready to start a family is a first step toward planning your future.

Abstinence is the most effective way to prevent pregnancy.

**ABSTINENCE**

Abstinence is the practice of restraining oneself from doing something that is wanted or enjoyable. It could be not indulging in something, such as a favorite food, drink, or activity.

Being abstinent—choosing not to have sex—is the only 100%-effective way to avoid pregnancy and lowers the risk for getting a sexually transmitted infection. For youth especially, abstinence has other benefits:

- Avoids some of the emotional consequences of sex, especially if the relationship does not work out, including feeling hurt, used, lonely, angry, or depressed.
- Gives young people time to grow emotionally and get ready for the possibility of becoming a parent one day, when they are ready and can afford to raise a child.
- Allows for time for young female reproductive organs to develop completely, to make sure that pregnancy and childbirth are safe.
- Costs nothing and has no side effects.
FAMILY PLANNING IS VERY IMPORTANT and people use it all around the world. Yet there are a lot of myths about methods for family planning (called contraceptives).

SOME COMMON MYTHS (NOT TRUE)
If you hear these, do not believe them!

- Contraceptives...
  - Cause abnormal babies (dull or lame children) — FALSE!
  - Cause cancer — FALSE!
  - Make a person weak — FALSE!
  - Cause damage to youth under age 18 — FALSE!

- If a guy “pulls out” before cumming, a girl cannot get pregnant. FALSE!

- You cannot get pregnant if, after sex, you take tea leaves, stand on your head, take a bath, or pee. FALSE!

- If you swallow aspirin after sex, you will not get pregnant. FALSE!
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<tr>
<th>You Have Questions?</th>
<th>Here Are Some Answers</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Is it bad or good to use contraceptives?</strong></td>
<td>Any youth who is playing sex and wants to avoid pregnancy should use contraceptives. Condoms are the only contraceptive that protects against both pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and HIV, if used all the time and correctly.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>If I start using contraceptives now, will I have problems getting pregnant in the future?</strong></td>
<td>No, your chances of getting pregnant are not affected.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>If a girl is a virgin and plays sex, can she get pregnant?</strong></td>
<td>Yes, if she has started menstruation.</td>
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<td><strong>Is it true that when playing sex for the first time, a girl cannot get pregnant, because the guy’s sperms are not mature enough?</strong></td>
<td>No, this is not true.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Is it true that using contraceptives makes women and girls infertile?</strong></td>
<td>No, except when a woman or man choose a permanent method (called “sterilization”).</td>
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</table>
ABOUT CONDOMS
Condoms stop semen/sperm from entering the vagina. The male condom, which is made of rubber or plastic, is worn over an erect (hard) penis. Put the condom on before sex and remove it immediately after sex. Put it in the pit latrine or burn it.

The female condom is a thin, soft, loose-fitting plastic pouch made of nitrile, a different kind of plastic than male condoms. It can be placed inside the vagina just before sex or up to 8 hours before it. Remove it immediately after sex. Put it in the pit latrine or burn it.

KEY BENEFITS
• Condoms are easy to use and available in many places.
• Safe and effective if they are used correctly every time you play sex, condoms can prevent both pregnancy and STIs, including HIV.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS
• Condoms may decrease sexual sensitivity in males or females.
Carefully open the package so the condom does not tear. (Do not use teeth or a sharp object to open the package.)

Do not unroll the condom before putting it on. If you are not circumcised, pull back the foreskin. Put the condom on the end of the hard penis. Note: *If the condom is initially placed on the penis backwards, do not turn it around. Throw it away and start a new one.*

Pinching the tip of the condom to squeeze out the air, roll on the condom until it reaches the base of the penis.
MALE CONDOM: AFTER SEX

1. After ejaculation, hold onto the condom at the base of the penis. Keeping the condom on, pull the penis out before it gets soft.

2. Slide the condom off without spilling the liquid (semen) inside. Take the used condom and throw it in the pit latrine or burn it.

4. Check to make sure there is space at the tip and that the condom is not broken. With the condom on, insert the penis for sex.
FEMALE CONDOM: BEFORE SEX

1. A. Check the expiration date on the package. Rub the outside of the pouch to be sure that the lubrication is spread evenly inside.

    B. Look for the arrow at the tear notch on the upper right, and then open the package carefully. Do not use teeth or a sharp object to open the package.

    C. Take out the female condom.

2. A. Relax and get into a comfortable position—standing with one foot on a chair, lying down, or squatting.

    B. Squeeze together the sides of the thick inner ring at the closed end of the condom, spread the lips of your vagina, and slide the female condom in.

    C. Push in the inner ring as far as it can go, up to your cervix. Make sure it’s not twisted.

    D. Pull out your finger and let the thin outer ring hang about an inch outside the vagina.
A. Guide your partner’s penis into the opening of the condom, making sure that it doesn’t slip between the condom and your vaginal walls.

B. The female condom may move around during sex. Movement of the outer ring from side to side is normal.

C. If you feel the female condom slipping out of your vagina or feel the outer ring being pushed into your vagina, STOP, remove the female condom, and insert a new one.

**FEMALE CONDOM: AFTER SEX**

A. After sex, to remove the female condom, squeeze and twist the outer ring (the part that’s hanging out) to keep semen inside the pouch.

B. Gently pull the female condom out of your vagina, being careful not to spill any semen.

C. Burn it or put it in the pit latrine.
TIPS ON MALE AND FEMALE CONDOM USE

• Never use a condom if the package is torn or if it has expired. (Look at the package!)

• Never use an oily lubricant, like baby oil or Vaseline, with a male condom—it will break.

• The female condom available in Uganda, FC2®, is prelubricated.

• Never reuse a condom.

• Never wear 2 condoms (double-bagging), as this can cause friction and might break the condoms. And never use a male condom and a female condom together.

• Condoms are available from health facilities, condom banks, the toilets in some hotels and lodges, shops, pharmacies and drug shops, village health teams, and peer educators. Condoms are usually FREE, except in drug shops, pharmacies, and some shops.

• Using condoms needs the cooperation of both partners. Be prepared before you get caught up in the excitement.

• Talk to your partner to make sure they are ready for condom use.
ABOUT IMPLANTS
Implants are small plastic rods about the size of a matchstick. A health care provider inserts them under the skin in a woman’s upper arm. They release very low amounts of a progestin into the blood.

KEY BENEFITS
Implants:
• Are highly effective and prevent pregnancy for 3–5 years.
• Can be inserted at any time during a woman’s menstrual cycle if she is not pregnant.
• Can be used by a new mother within 48 hours or later after delivery.
• Can be removed at any time, but only by a trained health professional.
• Do not interfere with sex and require no daily action.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS
• Can cause irregular bleeding—lighter or heavier, longer or shorter. After a year, periods may stop.
• Headaches, abdominal pain, and breast tenderness can occur.

IMPLANT BRANDS IN UGANDA
• Jadelle® has 2 rods and lasts up to 5 years.
• Implanon® NXT has 1 rod and lasts up to 3 years.

Implants do not protect against STIs and HIV—use a male or female condom every time.
Ask a health care provider for more information.
ABOUT THE PILL
The pill is made of hormones like those in the female body. Some oral contraceptives are made of 1 hormone called progestin. Others are made of 2 hormones called progestin and estrogen. Taking the pill makes the body believe that the ovaries are producing hormones, but they are resting. This prevents pregnancy by stopping ovulation (the release of the egg from the ovary).

KEY BENEFITS
- Women control their method.
- If you swallow 1 pill at the same time each day, you stay protected. The pill is safe, effective, and easy to use, but you have to remember to take it daily.
- Taking the pill is very private. No one else can know you are using the pill.
- Using the pill does not interfere with sex.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS
Combined Estrogen-Progestin Pills
- May cause nausea, weight changes (gain, loss or no change), headaches—some of these side effects can be relieved by changing to a new brand.
- May cause spotting the first 1–2 months.

Progestin Pills
- May cause nausea, weight changes (gain or loss), headaches—some of these can be relieved by changing to a new brand.
- Usually causes lighter bleeding, but can cause spotting (first 3–6 months). Bleeding may stop entirely.
PILL BRANDS IN UGANDA

- Microgynon®—estrogen and progestin
- Pillar®—estrogen and progestin
- Lo-Feninal®—estrogen and progestin
- Ovrette®—progestin
- Microlut®—progestin

TIPS FOR PILL USE

- If you forget to take a pill, you are unprotected. Talk with a health provider about how to catch up with missed pills.
- Talk with a health provider or peer educator for advice about side effects.
- Mothers who are breastfeeding can take progestin pills immediately after having the baby.
- Mothers who are not breastfeeding can take any type of pill.
- Get pills from health facilities, pharmacies and drug shops, village health teams, and peer educators.
- The pill does not protect against STIs or HIV—use a male or female condom.
ABOUT ECPs

ECPs have a special amount of progestin or special amount of progestin and estrogen (like the natural hormones in a woman’s body). ECPs are used to prevent pregnancy after unprotected sex.

ECPs are not abortion pills and do not cause an abortion. Pregnancy cannot happen unless the sperm fertilizes the female egg, which can happen up to 5 days after sex. ECPs prevent or delay the egg from leaving the ovary.

KEY BENEFITS

• Are safe for women of all ages, including adolescents, who may be less likely to prepare for a first or any sexual encounter.
• Reduce risk of unintended pregnancy.
• Can be taken within 5 days of unprotected sex (but take as soon as possible).
• Are more effective the sooner you take them.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

These are usually minor, temporary, and not harmful.

• ECPs may cause stomach upset or nausea.
• The next period may come early or late, and there may be spotting.

If your period is late by 1 week, go to a health center for a pregnancy test.

ECP BRANDS IN UGANDA

• Postinor-2®—progestin
ECPs are safe to use 1 or more times after unprotected sex, but use a more effective method to be prepared ahead of time.

It is not advisable to use ECPs on a regular basis.

**ECPs do not protect against STIs—use a male or female condom every time.**

Ask a health care provider for more information.

### You Have Questions? Here Are Some Answers

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<tr>
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<th>Answer</th>
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<tr>
<td><em>Can ECPs prevent pregnancy in cases when you are not raped?</em></td>
<td>Yes. ECPs can be taken by any woman who had unprotected sex, including forgetting to take her daily pill or other method, having a condom break, or being forced to have sex (rape).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Can ECPs cause infertility?</em></td>
<td>No. They are safe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Where can I get ECPs?</em></td>
<td>They are FREE at public health facilities and can be bought at pharmacies and private clinics.</td>
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</table>
CONTRACEPTIVE INJECTABLES (SHOTS)

ABOUT INJECTABLES
Injectables are hormonal, like the pill, but you do not have to remember to take them every day. Instead, a health care provider gives you a shot. Some injectables are made of progestin and some are made of estrogen and progestin. Injectables stop your body from releasing eggs from the ovaries. Without an egg, a woman cannot get pregnant. The shot is usually given in the upper arm and feels like a little sting.

KEY BENEFITS
• The injection is very private. No one else can know you are using injectables.
• One injection protects against pregnancy for 1–3 months.
• Injectables provide very good protection against pregnancy if the woman returns for her next injection on time.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS
These are usually temporary and not a serious problem.
• Monthly bleeding patterns may change: spotting, longer cycles, or no bleeding.
• Some women and girls gain weight while using injectables.
• It may take longer to get pregnant after you stop the shots.
• Side effects can last up to 6 months after you stop the shots.
INJECTABLE BRANDS IN UGANDA

- Depo-Provera®—progestin (lasts for 3 months)
- Sayana Press® or Unject™—low-dose progestin (lasts for 3 months)
- NET-EN®—progestin (lasts for 2 months)
- Norigynon®—estrogen and progestin (lasts for 1 month)

You Have Questions? Here Are Some Answers

If I miss a shot, will I get pregnant?
Yes; stay on schedule.

When should I go to the clinic for a repeat shot?
Repeat shots should be given on time, depending on the type of injectable. If you are not sure, talk to a health provider.

Which injection can I use if I am breastfeeding?
Depo-Provera® (3-month), Sayana Press® (3-month), and NET-EN® (2-month) are safe for a breastfeeding mother from 6 weeks onward after delivering her baby.

Injections do not protect against STIs and HIV—use a male or female condom every time.

Ask a health care provider for more information.
INTRAUTERINE DEVICE (IUD)

ABOUT THE IUD

An intrauterine device (IUD) is a small T-shaped device that fits inside a woman’s uterus. Inserting an IUD takes just a few minutes, after a health professional does a pelvic exam to determine if it is right for you.

IUDs do not cause abortion; that is a myth. IUDs slowly release copper into the uterus, which kills sperm and prevents the sperm and egg from joining.

KEY BENEFITS

• Young or adult women without a child or with children can use an IUD.
• The IUD is safe, effective, and lasts up to 10 years—but it is your right to have it removed by a trained provider at any time, for any reason.
• It can be inserted by a trained health provider 7 days after a woman’s last monthly bleeding.
• The IUD can be inserted within 48 hours after delivery when a woman gives birth at a health facility.
• It does not interfere with sex and requires no daily action.

COMMON SIDE EFFECTS

During the first 3–6 months, you may experience:

• Irregular/heavy monthly bleeding
• Cramps/pain during monthly bleeding

Talk with a health provider or peer educator about managing side effects.
IUDs do not protect against STIs and HIV—use a male or female condom every time.
Ask a health care provider for more information.

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<td>Does it hurt getting an IUD?</td>
<td>IUD insertion can cause discomfort (feels like a cramp). You might have spotty bleeding, but it is temporary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What can I do to relieve cramping/pain after getting an IUD?</td>
<td>Painkillers can help, and placing a hot water bottle on the stomach can bring natural relief.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it true that an IUD can pierce the man’s penis when having sex?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it true that an IUD can travel to the heart and cause a heart attack?</td>
<td>No.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I get pregnant after removing the IUD?</td>
<td>Yes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Where can I get an IUD?</td>
<td>Public health centers, mobile clinics, private clinics</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LACTATIONAL AMENORRHEA METHOD (LAM)

Lactation is another word for when a new mother produces breast milk, and amenorrhea means that most women or girls do not have a menstrual period while they are exclusively breastfeeding their baby. LAM is a natural and temporary way to prevent pregnancy shortly after giving birth.

However, LAM is effective only if these 3 things are true:

- Menstrual bleeding has not yet returned.
- The mother is fully or nearly fully breastfeeding her baby, day and night.
- The baby is less than 6 months old.

If the mother’s situation changes or if the baby is 6 months or older, pregnancy might occur. Plan ahead to use another contraceptive method to avoid unintended pregnancy.
CYCLE BEADS

Cycle beads (or moon beads) can be used by women and girls who have regular monthly menstrual cycles that usually last between 21 and 35 days. They help you keep careful track of when your period begins each month and of days when you should not have sex (usually days 8–19 of the cycle). This method takes a lot of effort and can be hard to get right, especially for youth with irregular cycles.

MALE AND FEMALE STERILIZATION

Sterilization is a simple, surgical operation available for adult men and women who do not want to have any more children ever. Male and female sterilization are permanent methods. Married couples or partners should talk with each other and a counsellor to make their own informed decision about this method.

LAM, cycle beads, and sterilization do not protect against STIs and HIV—use a male or female condom every time. Ask a health care provider for more information.
YOUTH HAVE CHOICES: TAKE CHARGE

With so many contraceptive methods, it can be confusing to make a choice. Before you decide to play sex, find out if you are ready. By “ready,” we mean physically and emotionally. If you are ready to take the big step or are already sexually active, talk with health providers and peer educators about your need for contraception and protection from STIs. They will:

• Answer questions about all methods
• Make sure a method is well-suited to your health
• Teach you how to use the method you select

There is no one “right” contraceptive for you. Not all methods are the same for everyone. Just because a friend disliked a method does not mean that you will too.

You can change methods or try new ones at any time. The choice is always yours.
You are responsible for your body and actions. Be yourself—protect and respect yourself and others! The choices and decisions you make belong to you.

Everyone needs support, no matter how independent they feel. Support is a great thing to give and receive. Trusted adults and peer educators are ready to help you if you have questions about your body, mind, and spirit. All questions are good questions—they open your mind to grow.
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