

Birth Control Options

For Alvord Brain Tumor Center patients

Why do I need to use birth control?

Your provider may advise you to use birth control to prevent pregnancy while you receive treatment for your brain tumor. This is because serious problems can happen if a child were to be conceived while you are on certain treatments. These problems include severe birth defects, prematurity, low birth weight, and stillbirth.

Both women and men must avoid conceiving:

- Women must avoid becoming pregnant or breastfeeding **during and after chemotherapy**.
- Men must avoid impregnating their partner **while taking chemotherapy**.

What type of birth control should I use?

We encourage you to talk with your provider about the birth control options that are best for you. If you need a specialist, your provider can give you a referral.

Most times, providers advise using **2 different forms** of birth control at the same time.

What about side effects?

All forms of birth control have side effects. Please talk with your provider about what side effects you may have, based on the forms you use.

Forms of Birth Control

The table on page 2 explains some forms of birth control, how to use them, and how they work.



Talk with your providers about your birth control options.

Form of Birth Control	How to Use It	How Often It Works
Condoms <i>No hormones</i>	Place device onto the penis before having sex. If you are on chemotherapy, this is one of the methods we advise using to prevent exchange of sexual fluid.	85% of the time
Birth Control Pill	Take a pill every day at the same time. It does not work if you do not take it exactly as directed.	91% of the time
Intrauterine Device (IUD) <i>May or may not use hormones</i>	Your OBGYN places a device in your uterus. Some devices can stay in for up to 12 years. Others must be changed every 3 years.	99% of the time
Vaginal Ring	Place this ring into your vagina and leave it in for 3 weeks. Then take it out and wait 1 week before putting in a new ring.	91% of the time
Birth Control Shot	Get an injection every 3 months.	94% of the time
Birth Control Patch	Wear the skin patch for 3 weeks, replacing it once a week. Do not wear it on the 4th week.	91% of the time
Birth Control Implant	Your doctor will insert a tiny, thin rod into your arm. It can stay in place for up to 5 years.	99% of the time
Diaphragm <i>No hormones</i>	Put this bendable cup inside your vagina to cover your cervix. It works best when used with spermicide.	88% of the time
Cervical Cap <i>No hormones</i>	Place this smaller version of a diaphragm inside your vagina to cover your cervix. It works only when used with spermicide.	71% to 86% of the time
Spermicide <i>No hormones</i>	Put this chemical deep into your vagina right before sex. It may be a cream, gel, film, or foam. Use it with a diaphragm, cervical cap, or condom.	71% of the time
Birth Control Sponge <i>No hormones</i>	Put this small round plastic sponge deep into your vagina before sex. It covers your cervix and contains spermicide.	76% to 88%
Withdrawal (pull-out method) <i>No hormones</i>	The partner must pull their penis out of the vagina before they <i>ejaculate</i> (release sperm).	78%

Questions?

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or healthcare provider if you have questions or concerns.

To talk with a nurse:

Weekdays from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., call 206.598.2282 and select option #2. After hours and on weekends and holidays, call our Community Care Line at 206.598.3300.