Emergency contraception
If you have had sex without using contraception or think your method might have failed there are two emergency methods you can use.
• Emergency pills - must be started up to three days (72 hours) after sex. They are more effective the earlier they are started after sex.
• An IUD - must be fitted up to five days after sex.

Sexually transmitted infections
Male and female condoms can help protect against sexually transmitted infections. Male latex condoms should carry the BSI Kitemark (BS EN 600) and European CE mark. Diaphragms and caps may also protect against some sexually transmitted infections.

Ask fpa for a free copy of the following leaflets:
• Your guide to contraception (all methods)
• The combined pill
• The progestogen-only pill
• Injections and implants
• The IUD
• The IUS
• Male and female condoms
• Diaphragms and caps
• Natural family planning
• Male and female sterilisation
• Emergency contraception
• After you've had your baby

A final word
This leaflet can only give you basic information about family planning and related services. Remember - contact your doctor or a family planning clinic if you are worried or unsure about anything.

How fpa can help you
fpa's nationwide Contraceptive Education Service (CES) Helpline is open Monday to Friday and provides:
• confidential information and advice on contraception and sexual and reproductive health
• details of family planning clinics, sexual health clinics and other sexual health services
• a wide range of leaflets

fpa UK
2-12 Harvistville Road, London NW3 9RE
Phone 020 7937 4044
9am to 7pm

fpa Cymru
Ground Floor, Riverside House, 31 Castell Road, Caerphilly CF8 1HP
Phone 029 2077 3123
9am to 5pm

fpa Northern Ireland
11 University Street, Belfast BT7 1HH
Phone 028 90 226 488
9am to 7pm

fpa Scotland
Unit 16, Perth Business Centre, 76 Perth Road, Clackmannan, FK7 7RA
Phone 081 576 5088
9am to 5pm

fpa Services 0700

Registered charity number 250187.

Supported by the Department of Health, the Health Education Board for Scotland, the Health Promotion Division of the National Assembly for Wales and the Health Promotion Agency for Northern Ireland.

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A guide to family planning services

Family planning is free through the National Health Service. It’s available from family planning clinics and most GPs and sexual health clinics so you have a choice of where to go. This leaflet explains the choices you have to help you find the service that’s most convenient and suitable for you.

Where can I go for contraceptives and advice?

You can choose where to go. You can obtain contraception from:

- your GP or practice nurse
- any GP, unless they state they don’t provide family planning services
- a family planning clinic (in some areas services are only provided for people under 25 or 30)

- a young people’s service
- some sexual health/incontinence medicine (GUM) clinics
- male and female condoms, diaphragms, caps and spermicides can be bought at a pharmacy.

Everything is confidential. This means that any information you give will not be shared without your permission.

How old do I have to be?

Any age. It doesn’t matter how old or young you are or whether you are male or female.

Will I have to see a doctor?

Not always - family planning and practice nurses can provide help and advice. Let the staff know if you have a preference for being seen by a male or female. Women won’t have to have a vaginal examination unless they want certain methods such as a diaphragm, cap, IUD or IUS, or unless they are worried that they might have a problem.

Choosing contraception

There are 13 different methods of contraception available and a doctor or nurse will help you to choose the one that’s best for you and your partner.

The doctor or nurse can describe all the methods and help you choose which method is best for you. They can answer any questions you may have about contraception or other sex. All family planning clinics and most GPs and sexual health clinics offer emergency contraception.

What other services are available?

Family planning services sometimes provide far more than contraception and some clinics and GPs offer the following:

- pregnancy testing
- help and advice on an unplanned pregnancy, which can include abortion referral or referral for ante-natal care (if you choose to continue with the pregnancy)
- safer sex advice - clinics and some GPs provide free condoms
- advice on sexual problems
- cervical smears
- tests for sexually transmitted infections
- advice on breast awareness
- menopause advice
- pre-pregnancy advice
- infertility advice

If your GP or family planning clinic does not offer all these services or all the contraceptive methods they should be able to tell you where you can go for them.

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How do I find a family planning service?

- You can find lists of GPs in libraries, post offices and advice centres or from health, authorities or health boards. Doctors who give contraceptive advice have the letter ‘C’ after their names.
- You can get details of your nearest family planning or sexual health clinic from your phone book, health centre, hospital, midwife or health visitor advice centre, helpline, health authority or health board.
- You can find out about all clinics from FPA’s CENS Helpline on 020 7837 4044.

Services for young people

Most health authorities have services for young people. You can get their details from a youth worker, school nurse or FPA. Phone 0800 0185 023 for details of your nearest Brook clinic offering free and confidential advice for young people.

At home

In some areas a doctor or nurse can visit a woman at home if she cannot visit a clinic or GP for contraception. Ask your GP or practice nurse, family planning clinic, health visitor, midwife or social worker.

Not happy with the service?

If you have a complaint about the service provided by your family planning clinic or GP, you need to take it up with your complaint with them first. Ask them for a leaflet which will tell you how to do this. If you are not satisfied after that, you can ask the local NHS Trust, health authority or health board for a review of your complaint by an independent panel. If you need help to make a complaint, your local Community Health Council can do this. They are