Contraception

Methods without user error

Injection (Depo-Provera)
- Over 99% effective
- Slow release of progestogen: stops ovulation; thickens cervical mucus to prevent sperm reaching egg; thins lining of womb to prevent egg implanting
- + Lasts for 12 weeks; protects against endometrial cancer; some protection against PID
- - Irregular / longer periods; takes some time for normal fertility to return; potential for weight gain / headaches / acne
- Cannot be removed from the body; not affected by other medicines

Implant
- Over 99% effective
- Small flexible match stick implanted under the skin that releases progesterone: stops ovulation; thickens cervical mucus to prevent sperm reaching egg; thins lining of womb to prevent egg implanting
- + Lasts for 3 years but can be taken out at any time; after removal normal level of fertility will return
- - Irregular periods; potential for acne / mood changes
- Inserted under local anaesthetic; can be felt but not seen; may be affected by some medicines

Intrauterine System
- Over 99.9% effective
- Small plastic device inserted into the uterus that releases progesterone: thickens cervical mucus to prevent sperm reaching egg; thins lining of womb to prevent egg implanting; may stop ovulation
- + Lasts for 5 years but can be taken out at any time; periods are much lighter / shorter / less painful; when removed normal level of fertility will return
- - Irregular bleeding / spotting; periods may stop altogether; may cause ovarian cysts
- Women can check IUS is still in place; very useful for those with heavy / painful periods; not affected by other medicines

Intrauterine Device
- Around 99% effective
- Small plastic / copper device inserted into the uterus: stops sperm reaching an egge; may stop egg implanting; does not cause an abortion
- + Can stay in place for 3 - 10 years; when IUD is removed normal levels of fertility return
- - Periods may be heavier / longer / more painful; small risk of ectopics
- Need to check for existing infection before insertion; not affected by other medicines

Female Sterilisation
- Around 99.5% effective
- Under GA fallopian tubes are cut or blocked to prevent sperm reaching the egg
- + Permanent; no long term side effects
- - Increased risk of ectopics
- Should not be chosen if any doubt or without counselling

Male Sterilisation
- Over 99.95% effective
- Vas deferens are cut or blocked to prevent sperm reaching the outside
- + Simple and quick operation; reversible
- - Small number of men experience ongoing testicle pain
- Should not be chosen if any doubt or without counselling

Methods with user error

Patch
- Over 99% effective (if used correctly)
- Small patch stuck to the skin releases oestrogen and progesterone: stops ovulation; thickens cervical mucus; thins endometrial lining
- + Easy to use; lighter periods; may protect against ovarian / endometrial cancer; not affected by D&V
- - Not suitable for smokers over 35; increased risk of thromobosis / breast cancer; side effects of headaches / breast tenderness; possible skin reaction
- New patch every week; less effective in larger women; some medicines make it less effective

Combined OCP
- Over 99% effective (if used correctly)
- Contains oestrogen and progesterone: stops ovulation; thickens cervical mucus to prevent sperm reaching the egg; thins lining of endometrium to prevent egg implantation
- + Reduced bleeding / period pain / premenstrual symptoms; protects against overian / endometrial / colon cancer; after stopping normal levels of fertility return
- - Contraindications: obesity / smoking / Hx of thrombosis; risk of thrombosis; increased risk of breast / cervical cancer; temporary minor side effects
- Missing pills / D&V can make it less effective; can be affected by other medicines (antiiconvulsants, St Johns wort, rifampcin)

Mini OCP
- Over 99% effective (if used correctly)
- Contains progesterone: thickens cervical mucus to prevent sperm reaching egg; thins lining of endometrium to prevent implantation; may stop ovulation
- + No serious SE; can be used by women who smoke & over 35; after stopping normal levels of fertility return
- - Needs to be taken at the same time each day; periods may stop / become irregular / more frequent; may be minor side effects such as spots / headaches; small risk of ectopics if it fails; may be less effective in larger women
- Not effective if taken over 3 (or 12) hours late; not effective after D&V; most common antibiotics do no affects mini pill

Male Condom
- 98% effective (if used and used correctly)
- Stops sperm entering the vagina
- + Widely available; can protect against STIs; no major side effects
- - Putting it on can interrupt sex; may slip or spill; man needs to withdraw as soon as he has ejaculated
- Oil based products can damage latex condoms (but not plastic ones)

Natural Family Planning
- 98% effective if using several fertility indicators and following effective teaching (otherwise lower than 75%)
- By monitoring fertility indicators fertile and infertile times of the menstrual cycle are identified
- + No side effects; can be used to plan a pregnancy
- - Method needs significant teaching and planning; women need to have regular cycles
- Computerised test kits are available