



Welcome!

This is where we share news and information related to contraception and sexual health, highlight any upcoming training and share information about local services.

Please continue to share information about the scheme with your colleagues and encourage them to join too. If you would like us to come and discuss this with your team or service, please get in touch.

In the news...



- [National Sexwise website closed as of 2nd March 2024. There are a number of publicly available platforms providing quality up to date information that can be found here](#)
- [Sexually transmitted infections \(STIs\): Data and trends for STIs in the East of England.](#)
- [The prevalence of sexually transmitted infections in young people and other high risk groups published March 2024](#)

If you have any feedback or questions, please email:

contraceptionchampion@hertfordshire.gov.uk

New service...Pharmacy Contraception Service

The Pharmacy Contraception Service has recently been launched. The contraceptive pill – Combined oral contraceptive (COC) and the Progesterone only pill (POP) are now available for free directly from community pharmacies without the need to visit a GP or sexual health service first. This is suitable for any person wishing to start oral contraception for the first time, restart following a pill free break, or switch to an alternative pill following consultation, as well as for people who have been previously supplied with oral contraception via primary care or a sexual health service and would like an ongoing supply.

As long as it is clinically appropriate, oral contraception is available for anyone who has capacity to consent, including those aged under 16 once they have been assessed as competent against Fraser competency criteria. COC can be provided to those up to and including age 49; and POP can be provided to those up to and including age 54.

Learning Zone



[Black voices on sexual health and contraception: A wide range of learning videos on experiences of sexual health services and on various contraceptive methods.](#)



[The Lowdown webpage offers a missed pill calculator.](#)



Need a supply of oral contraception?

NHS

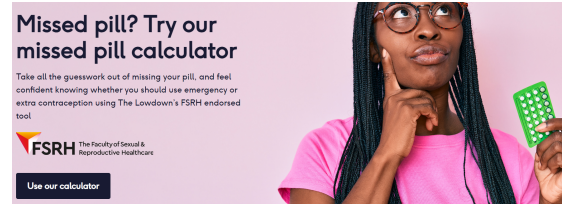
You can now arrange to get your first, or next supply directly from some of our local pharmacies in confidence.

Ask a member of our pharmacy team for more information.

You can find details of pharmacies local to you who have opted to provide this service here:

OR

Find a pharmacy that offers the contraceptive pill without prescription



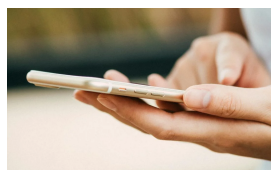
Missed pill? Try our missed pill calculator

Take all the guesswork out of missing your pill, and feel confident knowing whether you should use emergency or extra contraception using The Lowdown's FSRH endorsed tool.

FSRH The Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare

[Use our calculator](#)

Did you know...Chat Sexual Health



Hertfordshire Chat Sexual Health gives residents the opportunity to speak to a health professional anonymously and in confidence about their sexual health via text message. The SMS service is confidential though and you can choose to provide your details if you would like to. Text* 07312263535 [Check opening times here.](#)



Where are contraceptive pills available in Hertfordshire?

GPs: Many offer oral contraceptives alongside other methods of contraception.

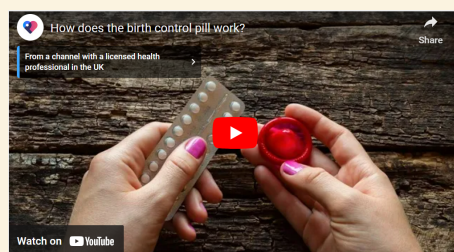
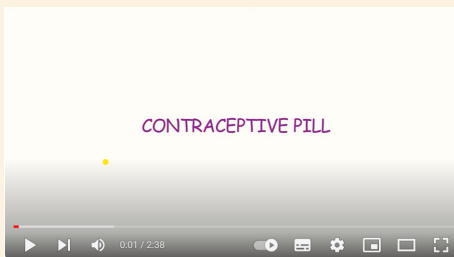
Sexual Health Hertfordshire Clinics in Hatfield, Stevenage, Watford, Elstree or Cheshunt. Online appointment booking via [Home :: Sexual Health Hertfordshire \(clch.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/home/sexual-health-hertfordshire).

Community Pharmacy Contraception Service - as per page 1.

SH:24

If someone is unable to access contraception via the above, a range of contraception methods are available online from [SH:24](#)

Information videos about oral contraceptives



Spotlight on... Contraceptive pills

There are two different types of oral contraceptive available. These are both hormonal contraception methods:

- Combined hormonal oral contraceptive (COC), containing oestrogen and progesterone, commonly known as 'the pill.' These work by blocking ovulation to prevent an egg from being released, thickening cervical mucus making it harder for the sperm to reach an egg, and making the lining of the uterus thinner, so an egg cannot implant there. There are two main types of COC pill – Everyday pills which require a pill to be taken each day; and 21 day pills, which require a pill to be taken for 21 days, followed by a 7 day pill free / break days. Within these types, 'monophasic' describes COC pills with a fixed amount of oestrogen and progesterone in each tablet, and 'multiphasic' describes those with varying amounts in each tablets. There are over 40 COC preparations from over 30 brands that all subscribe to a combination of these characteristics.
- Progestogen Only Pill (POP), sometimes referred to as the 'mini pill,' as indicated by it's name contains one hormone only and is an 'everyday pill.' They work similarly to the COC by thickening the mucus within the cervix, and preventing the uterus lining from thickening. There are 12 brands of POP available in the UK which fit into three main types (relating to the synthetic hormone ingredient contained): A new drospirenone POP called Slynd® is now available in the UK as of January 2024, has a wider 24 hour window for pill taking to support with ease of correct use; desogestrel POP which must be taken within 12 hours of the same time each day; and older traditional levonorgestrel or norethisterone POP that must be taken within 3 hours of the same time each day.



Important information to consider in relation to conversations around oral contraceptives that you may have:

- Contraceptive pills can vary in effectiveness. They are commonly over 99% effective if always taken as intended, however, with typical use, they tend to be around 91% effective. Users need to be aware that it's efficacy can also be further affected by use of other medicines, vomiting and diarrhoea.
- There are so many different kinds and variations of oral contraceptive pills available, that may suit different individuals, so, if an individual has expressed difficulty with one, for example, with their mood, or weight gain etc, it is important to encourage them to return to their prescriber to explore alternative options
- Unlike Long-Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC), oral contraceptive pills are user dependent, as they require the user to remember to take it each day, within the time window identified for use for each specific pill. This can be challenging for some who don't follow regular routines, however, there are apps that can support with reminding.
- Some people may worry about taking hormone medication, however, oral contraceptives are short-acting which means fertility will return to normal very quickly once stopped.
- Different pills may offer other health benefits for users so may also be used for non-contraception purposes, such as controlling period pain or heaviness, easing premenstrual syndrome, alleviating Endometriosis and Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS) and menopausal symptoms and providing protection against some types of cancer, such as womb, ovarian and bowel.
- Hormonal oral contraceptives provide no protection against sexually transmitted infections, so using condoms in addition may also be necessary.