

UNIT 1

WHAT IS CONTRACEPTION AND HOW DO I MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE?

Note: You should review these resources and links before use to check if they are appropriate for your pupils at Key Stage 3 or Key Stage 4 and in line with your school's ethos and RSE policy.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

Pupils are learning to:

- understand what contraception means;
- explore the range of contraceptive methods currently available, including their advantages, disadvantages and risks;
- understand how to make an informed choice about the most suitable contraceptive method;
- understand that choices around the use of contraception are based on a person's values and beliefs; and
- understand the importance of protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES

- Managing Information
- Thinking, Problem Solving and Decision Making
- Self-Management
- Working with Others.

LEARNING EXPERIENCES

- Enquiry based
- Offers choice
- Investigating and problem solving
- Supportive environment.

ATTITUDES AND DISPOSITIONS

- Personal responsibility
- Curiosity
- Respect.

Resources

- Resources A and B
- A3 or A4 paper
- Coloured pens
- Access to ICT
- [Center for Young Women's Health – Abstinence](#)
- [WebMD – Teen Boys and Abstinence](#)
- [Your Life Counts – Benefits of Abstinence](#)
- [NHS – What is contraception?](#)
- [FPA – Sexwise: Contraception](#)
- [Brook – Contraception](#)
- [Body Talk – Contraception: How much do you really know?](#)
- [Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3](#)

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Teaching Notes

Although the age of consent in Northern Ireland is 16, evidence suggests that some young people do not wait until 16 to engage in sexual activity. (See the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency [Young Persons' Behaviour and Attitudes Survey 2019](#), available at www.nisra.gov.uk, for more information.) This can create challenges for teachers. See below CCEA's advice from [Personal Development Guidance for Key Stage 4](#):

'As part of the curriculum, teachers can provide general information to all pupils about a range of issues, including the types of contraception and the risks to health, advice on smoking, gambling, alcohol etc. They can provide all pupils with information about where, and from whom, they can receive confidential advice, treatment and support. Personal medical advice must not be given to individual pupils. Teachers must advise pupils to seek advice from parents, the school health team or medical practitioners.'

Links to the Statutory Requirements for Personal Development at Key Stage 3

Key Concept – Self-Awareness

Pupils should have opportunities to:

- explore personal morals, values and beliefs; and
- investigate the influences on a young person.

Key Concept – Personal Health

Pupils should have opportunities to:

- explore the concept of health as the development of a whole person; and
- develop understanding about, and strategies to manage, the effects of change on body, mind and behaviour.

Key Concept – Relationships

Pupils should have opportunities to:

- explore the qualities of a loving, respectful relationship;
- develop coping strategies to deal with challenging relationship scenarios;
- explore the implications of sexual maturation; and
- explore the emotional, social and moral implications of early sexual activity.

Links to the Statutory Minimum Content for Learning for Life and Work at Key Stage 4

Personal Development

Pupils should be enabled to:

- develop an understanding of how to maximise and sustain their own health and wellbeing;
- reflect on, and respond to, their developing concept of self, including managing emotions and reactions to ongoing life experiences;
- recognise, assess and manage risk in a range of real-life contexts;
- develop their understanding of relationships and sexuality and the responsibilities of healthy relationships; and
- develop an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of parenting.

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Activity 1

What is contraception?

- Ask the pupils to complete a think, pair and share exercise on the question 'What is contraception?'
- This is a useful way to introduce the topic and to explore some of its complexities.
- See our [Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3](#) resource for details about **think, pair and share**.
- Pupil answers might include 'something to stop a pregnancy' and they might give examples of methods of contraception.
- Ask the groups to share their ideas in a class discussion and then encourage the pupils to agree a class definition of contraception.

Teaching Notes

- Keep in mind that the class will have a range of attitudes and experiences. Some of the pupils may be sexually active, while many others may not be. It's important that all pupils feel included in the discussion and confident that their voice will be heard and consideration taken of pupils' beliefs and values.
- You could use the following resources to discuss abstinence with the class:
 - [Center for Young Women's Health – Abstinence](#), available at www.youngwomenshealth.org
 - [WebMD – Teen Boys and Abstinence](#), available at www.webmd.com
 - [Your Life Counts – Benefits of Abstinence](#), available at www.yourlifecounts.org
- The word **contraception** simply means 'against conception'. So, in theory, anything that prevents conception is contraception. Conception happens when a sperm fertilises an egg. Contraception works by either:
 - keeping the egg and sperm apart;
 - stopping ovulation (the release of an egg); or
 - preventing the fertilised egg attaching to the lining of the womb.
- Explain to the pupils that this does not mean all contraception is safe or effective.
- At this point, you should review the age of consent and the law with the pupils to make sure they understand the following points:
 - The age of sexual consent is 16 in Northern Ireland, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.
 - There are laws to protect children under 16 from sexual abuse. However, these laws are not intended to prosecute teenage sexual activity where it is mutually agreed between two people of a similar age, unless abuse or exploitation is involved.
 - Specific laws protect children under 13 years of age who cannot legally give their consent to any form of sexual activity.
 - Remind the pupils that practising abstinence is a healthy choice for many young people.

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Activity 2

Contraception mind map

- As a class (or in small groups if more appropriate) ask the pupils to list or name as many methods of contraception as they can. At this point, accept slang or colloquial terms.
- Divide the pupils into pairs or small groups.
- Give each group a sheet of A3 or A4 paper, coloured pens and a copy of Resource A, which contains a list of current contraceptive methods.
- Ask the groups to complete a mind map for one or two of the contraceptive methods, making sure that the class as a whole covers a wide range of methods.
- Give the class the following headings as guidance:
 - How does the contraceptive method work?
 - Is it reliable?
 - What are the advantages?
 - What are the disadvantages and risks?
 - Does it protect against STIs?
 - Who would it be suitable for?
- Ask the groups to share their mind maps with the rest of the class and:
 - discuss the information they know about contraception; and
 - identify where there are gaps in their knowledge.
- Pupils will return to the mind maps at the end of Activity 3 to show what new knowledge and understanding they have gained.

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Activity 3

Contraception facts

- You can use the NHS page [What is contraception?](#), available at www.nhs.uk, as a reference source for this activity.
- The websites below feature detailed, up-to-date information about contraception. They are aimed at young people and can help to dispel some of the myths about contraception.
 - [FPA – Sexwise: Contraception](#), available at www.sexwise.org.uk
 - [Brook – Contraception](#), available at www.brook.org.uk
- Use one or more of the sites with the class to show the different methods of contraception and then encourage a class discussion.
- After giving the class enough time to research the different contraceptive methods, give each pupil a copy of Resource B and ask them to complete the 3-2-1 evaluation.
- Then ask the pupils to return to their mind maps from Activity 2 and complete any gaps using the knowledge they have gained in this activity.
- Display these mind maps around the classroom and use them as a focal point for discussion and to prompt any further questions.
- If you are unsure of an answer to a question, be prepared to say so and tell the class that you will try to find out more information for the next lesson.
- You may wish to provide an Any Questions? box for pupils to anonymously post questions they are unwilling to ask in the classroom in front of their peers. You can then anonymously discuss these questions during another lesson.
- Complete this activity by asking the pupils to try the Body Talk [Contraception: How much do you really know?](#) quiz, available from www.bodytalk.org.uk



Activity 4

Review of learning intentions

It's important that pupils have opportunities to reflect on their learning. You can choose from a range of methods detailed in our [Active Learning and Teaching Methods for Key Stage 3](#) resource, such as:

- Dartboard Evaluation
- Graffiti Board
- Fist-to-Five
- KWL (Know – Want to Know – Learned) Grid
- Post-It Collection.

**RESOURCE A:
METHODS OF CONTRACEPTION**

| |
|--|
| Male condom |
| Female condom |
| Contraceptive pill |
| Morning after pill (emergency contraception) |
| Contraceptive implant |
| Contraceptive injection |
| Contraceptive patch |
| Vaginal ring |
| Diaphragm (cap) |
| The rhythm method |
| Intrauterine device (IUD) |
| Intrauterine system (IUS) |
| Sterilisation |
| Abstinence |

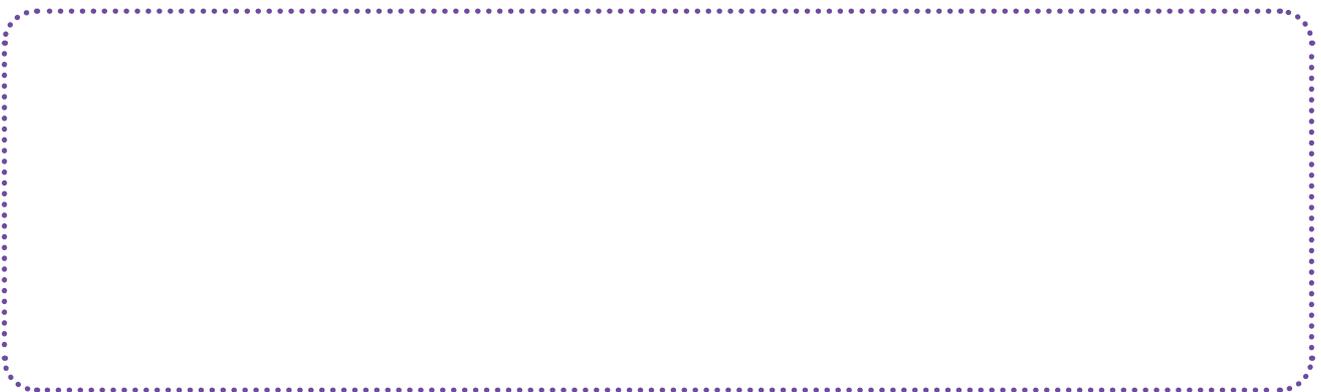
**RESOURCE B:
REVIEWING MY KNOWLEDGE OF CONTRACEPTION**

After reviewing the different methods of contraception, complete the 3-2-1 evaluation below.

3 pieces of information that I already knew



2 new pieces of information that I found out



1 myth that was dispelled

