



Success Rates of Contraception Methods

Ultimately, your success in using contraception, will depend more on the quality of your information, your consistent and intentional use and choosing the right method/s for you than on success rates alone.

Conscious intention

As you are likely to need contraception for many decades of your life, it is well worth your while becoming well-informed about different methods, their effectiveness, their effect on your health, how they work, their usefulness in different situations and so on.

Francesca Naish has found that contraception can be undermined by the mixed feelings we have about it. We may not consciously want to conceive, and yet we may also want children one day, fantasise about a 'mistake', wonder about our capacity to conceive, experience heightened cluckiness when we fall in love, or when friends and family are having babies. This can at times lead to diminished care when using our chosen methods. Also, commonly and naturally, we may be much more interested in the emotional intensity of the moment, than in being precise about using our contraceptive methods.

One simple way to address these factors is to make a clear intention at the beginning of each cycle for the duration of that cycle. To do this: on the first day of your period clarify your intention that you do not want to conceive during this cycle. You may use some of the quiet meditative space of menstruation to visualise using your chosen method/s of contraception successfully, as well as some general life-dreaming.

It is also very important to acknowledge that no method of contraception is 100 per cent, and by being aware of the intrinsic relationship of fertility to sexuality, we can make healthy, conscious choices for ourselves and for our relationships.

Natural Fertility Management

To assess the statistical effectiveness of Natural Fertility Management we consider the rates of each of the methods to achieve our theoretical success rate.

Method	Theoretical Success Rate (%)	User Success Rate (%)
Sympto-thermal Method	97 - 99	70 - 98
Mucus Method	97 - 99	70 - 99
Temperature method*	93 - 99	70 - 98
Rhythm Method (regular cycles)	98	60 - 85
Rhythm Method (irregular cycles)	55	30 - 55
Lunar Cycle (with rhythm)	98.5	97.5 - 98.5

*Temperature method used on its own implies abstinence in pre-ovulatory phase

Both mucus and sympto-thermal methods have been found to have user success rates as high as 99.8 per cent in groups that are both well-taught and well-motivated.

By combining mucus and temperature a high success rate can be achieved as these are able to pinpoint:

- the beginning of the fertile time leading up to ovulation (mucus)
- ovulation itself (temperature)
- and the end of mid-cycle ovulation (by adding margins to allow for egg-life)

By adding the lunar biorhythmic calculations to mucus and temperature we can enhance effectiveness as this method encompasses our capacity to spontaneously ovulate – no matter when in the cycle the lunar fertile time occurs. Comprehensive research of over 10,000 women found that when the lunar method was added to the rhythm method its effectiveness jumped spectacularly to 98.5 per cent. Almost all the women who did conceive when combining rhythm and lunar methods had irregular cycles, a factor that diminishes the effectiveness of the rhythm method, but does not diminish the effectiveness of the temperature and mucus methods.

Mucus and temperature pinpoint ovulation, no matter the length or variability of the cycle, and coupled with the lunar method we would expect a significantly higher success rate, of at least 99 to 99.5 per cent.

Success rates for chemical and mechanical methods of contraception

Method	Theoretical Success rate (%)	User success rate (%)
Combined pill	99.5	95 - 99
Mini-pill	97 - 99	93 - 99
IUD	94 - 99	93 - 98
Condoms	95 - 99	80 - 93
Diaphragm/cap (plus spermicide)	92 - 98	80 - 97
Vaginal Ring	96	96
Spermicide (chemical)	85 - 95	70 - 85
Spermicide (vitamin C)	96	96
Withdrawal	90	70 - 85
Injections (Depo-Provera)	99	99
Skin Implants (Implanon)	99	99
Sterilization (male & female)	99.5 - 99.9	93 - 99.9

Theoretical success rate means that rate attainable if the method is used correctly 100 per cent of the time, in other words, only accounting for method failures.

User success rate means that rate actually recorded from users.

(These Success rates are quoted from Natural Fertility Pgs 345-346).