

CONTRACEPTION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

FACT SHEET

It's important that we make sexual health a priority even as the COVID-19 pandemic disrupts our regular way of life. This means ensuring that you have access to effective contraception to prevent pregnancy.

Remember that you can use condoms in addition to your current contraception to help prevent sexually transmitted infections (STIs) as well as unintended pregnancy.

What if I don't currently have any contraception?

If you need advice on contraception you can call and make a telehealth (phone-based) appointment with your regular GP. You can also arrange a telehealth appointment with a doctor at SHINE SA.

If you want to discuss your contraception options you can call SHINE SA's Sexual Healthline. Call: 1300 883 793; Toll free: 1800 188 171 (country callers only). The line is open Monday – Friday, 9:00 am – 12:30pm.

What if I have had unprotected sex and don't want to get pregnant?

If you are worried about having missed/delayed contraception, or have had unprotected sex, you can take the emergency contraceptive pill (ECP). You can access ECP from community pharmacies. There are two types of ECP and the type you should take depends on a number of circumstances. You can discuss this with your pharmacist, GP or SHINE SA. Depending on the type of ECP, it can be effective for up to 120 hours after unprotected sex but the sooner it is taken, the greater the effectiveness.

At this time you might also consider having an STI test and whether you could change your contraception method to one more reliable for your circumstances. To discuss this you can contact your own GP or call 8300 5300 to arrange a phone appointment with one of SHINE SA's doctors.

How can I get a repeat of my Pill script?

Speak to your GP or general practice to organise a telehealth appointment. In this appointment your GP can provide a prescription if appropriate. You can discuss with your GP how to collect the prescription and medication. There may be alternatives for people who are self isolating.

What if I currently have injectable contraception (Depo Ralovera or Provera)?

If your contraceptive injection is due contact your GP to organise a telehealth appointment. If you wish to continue the contraceptive injection you may be able to arrange an appointment for this. If you are self isolating, feeling unwell, or wish to change to a method of contraception that doesn't require regular appointments, you can discuss this in your telehealth appointment. If you are due or overdue for your injection consider using condoms to prevent unintended pregnancy.

What if I currently have a LARC?

If you have a long-acting reversible contraceptive (LARC), sexual health experts in Australia have recently released guidance on what you can do about your contraception during the pandemic. If you are due to have your LARC removed or replaced soon it may be possible to extend use of the device during the pandemic. Speak to your GP about what is possible and consider using condoms during this time.

Mirena Intrauterine Device (IUD)

If you were under 45 years of age when your Mirena IUD was inserted, you can speak to your GP about extending use of this device for up to 6 years (rather than 5 years) during the pandemic.

This means that if you are due to have your Mirena removed it may be possible to postpone removal. It's important that you discuss this with your doctor and consider the additional use of condoms and/or a contraceptive pill. The device must be removed/replaced within 6 years from insertion.

Australian current practice supports the option of extended use of the Mirena IUD until menopause when it is inserted at the age of 45 years or above, as long as it is not being used as part of your hormone replacement therapy.

Kyleena IUD

Extended use of the Kyleena IUD is not recommended. If your Kyleena IUD was inserted 5 or more years ago additional use of condoms and/or a contraceptive pill is advised until safe removal/replacement can be undertaken.

Copper IUD

If you were under 40 years of age when your Copper IUD was inserted and you have a 5-year Copper IUD, you can speak to your GP about extending use of this device for up to 6 years (rather than 5 years) during the pandemic. The device must be removed/replaced within 6 years from insertion.

If you were under 40 years of age when your Copper IUD was inserted and you have a 10-year Copper IUD, this could be extended for up to 12 years of use (rather than 10 years) during the pandemic. The device must be removed/replaced within 12 years from insertion.

Australian current practice supports the option of extended use of all copper IUDs available for insertion in Australia until menopause when the device is inserted at the age of 40 years or above.

Implanon NXT

Some limited research suggests that there is a low risk of pregnancy in the 4th year of having the contraceptive implant (this only applies to the type currently available in Australia).

If you currently have an Implanon NXT inserted you can speak to your GP about delaying replacement of this to 4 years from insertion (rather than 3 years) to avoid having to make a face-to-face appointment during the pandemic. It's important that you discuss this with your doctor and consider the additional use of condoms and/or a contraceptive pill particularly if pregnancy is an unacceptable risk to you. The device must be removed/replaced within 4 years from insertion.

What if I no longer need my LARC?

If contraception is not required, all LARC methods may be left in place until removal can be arranged following the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

The above types of contraception do not protect against STIs or blood-borne viruses (BBVs). Practise safer sex. Condoms help prevent pregnancy and reduce the risk of STIs and BBVs.

CONTACT
SHINE SA

SHINESA

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SHINE SA Fact Sheets are regularly reviewed and updated. To download the most recent version visit www.shinesa.org.au

Clinic & Counselling Appointments and General Enquiries

Tel 8300 5300

Clinic locations and times are available at www.shinesa.org.au

Sexual Healthline

Tel 1300 883 793 **Country callers (toll free)** 1800 188 171

Talk to a sexual health nurse about any sexual health issue.

Available 9am – 12.30pm, Monday – Friday

National Relay Service

www.relayservice.gov.au

133 677 (TTY/Voice) 1300 555 727 (Speak & Listen) 0423 677 767 (SMS Relay)