

ABSTINENCE

(Based on Managing Contraception Pocket Guide 2019-2020)

Effectiveness: The only method that is 100% effective.

Action:

Abstinence is the absence of genital contact that could cause a pregnancy, such as penetration of the vagina by the penis.

Advantages:

- No cost
- Can be used as an interval method
- No period changes or other medical problems
- May increase self-esteem and positive self-image (feel better about yourself)
- May encourage couples to build relationships in other ways
- May reduce risk of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) (unless vaginal intercourse replaced with oral or anal sex)
- You can practice abstinence at any time

Disadvantages:

- Risk of pregnancy if do not maintain abstinence
- Requires commitment and self-control
- Frustration if abstinence is not adhered to
- No protection from sexually transmitted diseases if do not maintain abstinence

Instructions:

- Learn how to say “**no**” and how to resist peer and social pressures
- Set ground rules for yourself regarding what activities are okay
- Ensure that partner explicitly agrees to abstain
- Stress this decision may just be a decision to delay intercourse. Remind that may use or return to abstinence at any time in life

