ABSTINENCE

Effectiveness: The only method that is 100% effective.

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 (pause or break) 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 followed
- 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
- Abstinence can be used as a means to delay or avoid having sex until the time is right, or not at all
- Prepare for time when (or if) you decide to stop delaying sex; consider carrying condoms
- This topic can be challenging and sometimes a little confusing. It can be helpful to include a parent or other trusted adult that you can talk to about things like dating, relationships, and pregnancy prevention.

Reference: