

Safe Methods at the Right Time Patient Fact Sheet


What is the Safe Methods at the Right Time Program ("the Program")?

The Program gives free birth control to eligible women after having an abortion.

Who can join this Program?

Free birth control is offered to all women who:

- Have signed up with the BC Medical Services Plan (MSP); and
- Allow their information to be shared so the Program may be reviewed

Birth control must start on the day  your abortion is completed
or, for medical abortions,
within 2 weeks of this date

What birth control choices are offered?

Your health worker will speak about a broad range of birth control choices with you. The pros and cons of each choice will be reviewed to help you decide which one would be best.

Two of the most useful methods are free through the Program:

1. Intrauterine contraceptives (IUDs) - Mirena (hormone-releasing) or copper (non-hormonal)
2. Hormonal contraceptives - 1 package of pills OR 1 shot of Depo-Provera

What if I do not select a birth control choice given through the Program?

You will continue to have access to the full range of birth control choices, but you will need to pay for them yourself. Your care, however, will not change.

Why is free birth control offered?

BC research has shown that about half of women who have an abortion each year will have a pregnancy within two years if they do not start a birth control at the time of their abortion. Research also shows that over half of women will take an effective birth control method, such as a hormone-releasing or a copper intrauterine device (IUD), when given free and ready for placing in at the time of the abortion. Less than 15% choose such methods when patients are required to pay. When an IUD is chosen, research has also shown that women are more satisfied and have far fewer unintended pregnancies than with other options.

What else might you like to know?

The Program is being led by BC Women's Hospital and Health Centre, an agency part of the Provincial Health Services Authority. The Program is being offered as a one to two year "pilot project" (i.e., on a trial basis) and BC Women's plans to test the result at the end of the pilot project. This will help test the success of the Program and to support it to continue.

When you receive free birth control through this Program, personal information will be gathered from you as authorized under section 26 (c) and 26 (e) of the *BC Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("FIPPA")*.

Your facility will give some of the personal information to BC Women's: name, personal health number, date of birth, date and facility in which the abortion was performed, type of procedure (surgical or medical) and birth control method chosen. BC Women's, working with evaluators from UBC, will use the information to assess how the pilot project is meeting its goals.

If you have First Nations Health Benefits, Non-insured Health Benefits for First Nations and Inuit or receive support from BC government social assistance, this information will also be given to BC Women's. This will help them know how much money to give to each facility for the birth control.

Two years after the end of the pilot project, BC Women's will give the names, personal health numbers and dates of birth of women taking part in the Program to the Ministry of Health and will ask for information from the Ministry of Health on later abortions and births. This information will help BC Women's test the success of the Program and support its continuation. Information sent to BC Women's from the Ministry of Health will not have any names or other information that would name individuals.

For women who do not select a birth control option funded by the Program, no names or other information that would identify the person is given to BC Women's.

We are committed to protecting the privacy of personal information for all women. We respect your right to personal privacy and take all fair steps to make sure that personal information is treated confidentially, is only used for the purposes described above and is securely stored.

Reports generated from the information collected are always in summarized form and do not have names or other identifying information.

Should you have questions about the collection, use or disclosure of your personal information, please contact the Program Manager, Room B223A, BC Women's Hospital, 4500 Oak Street, Vancouver, BC, V6H 3N1 at 604-875-3683.