There are many methods of contraception readily available to University students through University Health Services, the Health Promotion Resource Center, and the Gender and Sexuality Center.

**Condoms**

The most effective method to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), is the latex condom, which is available in the Gender and Sexuality Center, University Health Services Pharmacy, and the Health Promotion Resource Center. In regards to the transmission of STIs the second most effective condom is the nitrile female condom, which is not available on-campus, but is available at some drug stores. In addition to preventing STIs, latex condoms are 98% effective at preventing pregnancy when used consistently and correctly.

**The Pill and Intrauterine Devices**

Continuous contraception comes in different forms, including the birth control pill, the intrauterine device, the patch, the shot, the ring, and the implant. The pill prevents pregnancy by releasing hormones that stop ovulation and make the lining of the uterus thinner. Many varieties of the pill are available and you can learn about them at the Methods of Contraception class offered at UHS. It is possible to receive a prescription for these pills at UHS through the Women's Health Clinic.

IUDs come in two varieties: the Paragard is made of plastic and has small pieces of copper on it and Mirena is plastic with a reservoir that releases progestin, a hormone. IUDs must be inserted and removed by a healthcare provider. Both IUDs and the pill are available through University Health Services. You can make an appointment with the Women’s Health Clinic at UHS to discuss whether and IUD is right for you((512) 471-4955).

**The Shot**

The shot, Depo-Provera, contains progestin, which prevents ovaries from releasing eggs and thickens cervical mucus to block sperm from getting to eggs. A single dose prevents pregnancy for three months. You can make an appointment with the Women’s Health Clinic at UHS to discuss whether the shot is right for you.

**The Ring**

Under the brand name NuvaRing, is an insertable method of contraception that prevents pregnancy by distributing hormones that thicken the cervical mucus in order to block sperm from reaching eggs. The ring is inserted into the vagina and left there for 3 weeks and then taken out for 1 week before a new ring is inserted. A prescription for the ring can be provided through UHS with an appointment at the Women’s Health Clinic.

**Non-Hormonal and Barrier Methods**

There are methods of contraception that are female-controlled barrier methods that are non-hormonal, including the cervical cap and diaphragm (which are reusable), spermicide, the female condom, and the sponge.

**Cervical Cap**

The cervical cap (FemCap) and the diaphragm function similarly, they are silicone cups placed to cover the cervix and prevent sperm from entering the uterus. In order for this to be most effective, caps and diaphragms are used in conjunction with spermicide. The cup must be inserted several hours before sex and must be kept in for six hours afterward. Both are reusable, but must be washed after every use. The cervical cap and diaphragm must be sized by a doctor and then purchased with a prescription. Spermicides, which are available as gels, foams, or suppositories, are available in drug stores and supermarkets without a prescription. They work by releasing chemicals that prevent sperm from moving and reaching the cervix.
Female Condom
A female condom is a nitrile tube with a closed end. It is inserted in the vagina with the closed end near the cervix, and is inserted the way a tampon is. This method of contraception also protects against sexually transmitted infections. Female condoms are available in drugstores and some supermarkets.

The Sponge
The sponge is a piece of plastic foam that is inserted into the vagina in order to block the cervix. It releases spermicides in order to further prevent the possibility of pregnancy. A sponge does not require a prescription and is available in family planning centers, drugstores, and several supermarkets.

Emergency Contraception
Emergency contraception, also called Plan B One Step, is for use after sexual activity, though it is less effective than pre-activity methods and does not stop the transmission of sexually transmitted infections. EC prevents pregnancy by delaying an egg from being released and by changing the environment of the vagina so that sperm cannot move quickly enough to create a pregnancy. Emergency contraception can be taken up to five days after sexual activity and is available without a prescription at the UHS Pharmacy for students of any gender who are 17 or older. You must bring a state ID to purchase Plan B One Step.

University Health Services
University Health Services offers a Methods of Contraception Class; a program taught by Healthy Sexuality Peer Educators and is an overview of all the methods of contraception offered at UHS. A full schedule of these classes is available on the UHS website.

The website for the Healthy Sexuality Peer Educators is: http://healthyhorns.utexas.edu/peereducation.html#B
and the website for the Methods of Contraception Class is: http://www.healthyhorns.utexas.edu/contraception.html

For female-assigned-at-birth students who prefer not to be seen in the Women’s Health clinic, you may request contraception or other gynecological services in a General Medicine clinic by asking when you call to make an appointment.

UHS is committed to patient privacy and rights. Patients at UHS have the right to be treated with respect, consideration, and dignity, as well as the right to change practitioners and the right to make suggestions and state grievances. Medical information, including sexual history, type of appointment, contraception information, STI testing information, or any other health-related concern is kept strictly private for all patients over the age of 18 unless they have given explicit written consent to share that information with others. The UHS Patient Rights and Responsibilities statement can be read in full here. http://www.healthyhorns.utexas.edu/privacy.html

Safer Sex
The most effective, and the most likely to prevent the spread of sexually transmitted infections, is the latex condom, which is available in the Gender and Sexuality Center, University Health Services Pharmacy, and the Health Promotion Resource Center. In regards to the transmission of STIs the second most effective condom is the nitrile female condom, which is not available on-campus, but is available at some drug stores.

Dental Dams
Also available are dental dams, which are used for either oral/vaginal sex or oral/anal sex. A dental dam is a sheet of latex placed over the orifice to prevent infection and the transmission of sexually transmitted infections.

UHS provides testing and treatment for STIs. To make an appointment, call 471-4955. For information on free STI testing in Austin, go to: http://healthyhorns.utexas.edu/education.html