



*Be logical! Don't skip out on birth control waiting for this cool stuff to arrive.*

# THE FUTURE OF BIRTH CONTROL

We've come a long way since the days of pulling-and-praying, but the genius stuff coming down the pike is on a whole new level.

## Origami Condoms

ETA: LATE 2015  
The revolutionary rubbers get their name from their design. They're folded, not rolled like traditional condoms. Lube inside, accordion pleats outside, and supple silicone instead of latex will work together to reduce chances of tearing. Plus, it will feel better for him because the barrier moves with his bod.

## The STI-Fighting Ring

ETA: LATE 2019  
A new intravaginal ring, worn for 90 days at a time, could protect against both pregnancy and viruses like HIV and herpes. The secret? Combining the contraceptive hormone levonorgestrel, currently used in implants and IUDs, with the antiretroviral drug Tenofovir.

## The Male Pill

ETA: EARLY 2020s  
Researchers are testing ways that testosterone and progesterone could stop sperm production. Another idea: A hormone-free pill that would block vitamin A, which is needed for sperm production. Surveys show that most men would be willing to take the pills—let's give them that chance.

—MARISSA GAINSBURG

SOURCES: JOHN AMORY, MD, PROFESSOR OF MEDICINE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON; MEREDITH CLARK, PHD, MANAGER, DRUG DELIVERY FOR CONRAD; DANNY RESNIC, ORIGAMI INVENTOR



## Ask Dr. Ashton

**Q** I just found out I have an STI, but my boyfriend swears he hasn't cheated on me. Could I have gotten it from a toilet seat or towel?

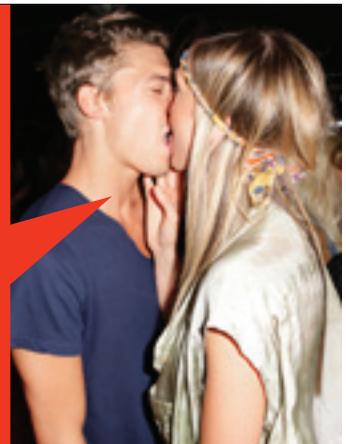
SOURCE: JENNIFER ASHTON, MD, AN OB-GYN AND SENIOR MEDICAL CONTRIBUTOR FOR ABC NEWS

**A** No. The germs die within seconds outside the body. You get STIs only from sexual contact: vaginal, oral, or anal sex and fingering. That means that (sorry) your boyfriend is lying or one of you already had it but didn't know. It can take some time after you're exposed to an STI for the test to read positive: gonorrhea takes 1 to 14 days, HIV tests can take 3 months, and HPV can be dormant for decades. If you're sexually active, you and your partner(s) need STI testing at least yearly.

## IF YOU'RE WORRIED ABOUT Meningitis

The campus outbreaks—involving bacterial strains vaccines don't cover—are scary, but your risk is tiny. The infection is passed by exchanging saliva, so don't share cups or food. And maybe don't hook up with a guy with a hacking cough: Respiratory illness is common in the days leading up to diagnosis. —LIZ PLOSSER

SOURCE: THOMAS CLARK, MD, CHIEF OF THE MENINGITIS BRANCH OF THE CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION



## WTF Is a V Steam?

This treatment is trending at spas in L.A. and NYC. The gist: A woman sits on a chair, exposing her vagina to a steaming pot of water infused with herbs. This supposedly balances hormones, boosts circulation, and eliminates “toxins.” But there's zero research backing those claims. The vaginal canal cleans itself. In fact, steaming may clear out good-for-you bacteria. Let your body do its thing—consult your gyno if you feel off. —M.G.

SOURCE: MARY JANE MINKIN, MD, CLINICAL PROFESSOR OF OBSTETRICS, GYNECOLOGY, AND REPRODUCTIVE SCIENCES AT YALE SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM RIGHT: HADLEY HUDSON/THE LICENSING PROJECT; MICHAEL BENABIB; COURTESY ORIGAMI; EVERETT COLLECTION