

# Couple Contraception

Aids  
Rights

Pregnancy



# Table of contents

|                                     |    |
|-------------------------------------|----|
| Female genital organs               | 2  |
| Male genital organs                 | 4  |
| Contraception                       | 5  |
| Your rights                         | 13 |
| Sexually transmitted diseases       | 14 |
| Aids                                | 16 |
| Pregnancy                           | 18 |
| Termination of pregnancy (abortion) | 20 |

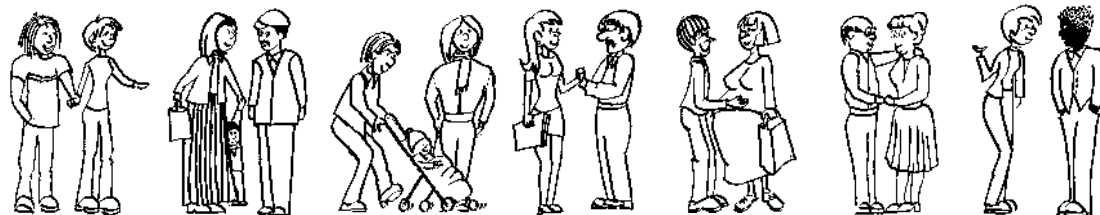
From one country to another, the forms of contraception available, planning for pregnancy, birth as well as sexuality talk vary.

This booklet on sexual health matters is for all women immigrants in Switzerland.

We hope it will help you understand better our practices and choose the right moment for a pregnancy under the best circumstances.

Everywhere in Switzerland, you can be heard, informed or counselled in family planning and Aids prevention centers.

A list of useful contacts is available on the website: **[www.plan-s.ch](http://www.plan-s.ch)**



# Female genital organs

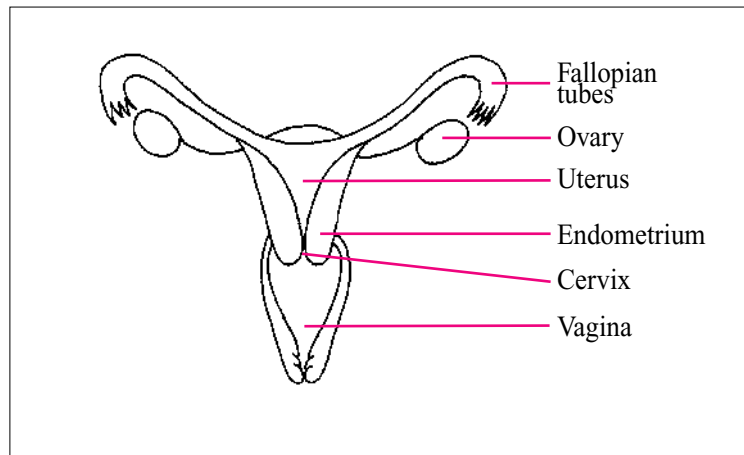
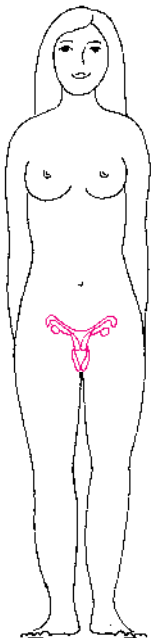
The outer part of the female genital organs (sex) is the **vulva**. It is formed of labia (lips) which rim the vagina and the urethra. Urethra is a thin tube which carries urine from the bladder. Passing over the urethra is the **clitoris**, a small sensitive organ which plays an important role in sexual excitement.

## The vagina...

...is a supple tube 7 to 10 cm long. It is where the man's penis enters during sexual intercourse. It is very elastic so it can stretch around the baby during labour. It also carries the menstrual blood. Sexual desire produces the lubrication of the vagina which facilitates penetration.

## The hymen...

...is a thin membrane partly open and situated at the entrance of the vagina that women have when virgins. Its shape is different from one woman to another. Some women do not have a hymen. Generally, it breaks during the first sexual intercourse.



## Uterus or Womb

It is where the foetus develops itself. It looks like a pear upside down. In the womb, a thin layer of mucous called the endometrium grows each cycle. When you are pregnant, the endometrium forms a nest for the embryo but if fecundation does not take place, it is shed through the monthly period.

The lower part which joins the vagina to uterus is called the cervix. It is a small opening which allows the passage of menstrual blood and spermatozoa. At birth time, the **cervix** and vagina open and stretch to make a passage for the baby.

## Ovaries

There are two ovaries, each about the size of an almond and its shape. They have two functions:

- ◆ They produce sexual hormones which regulate the cycle.
- ◆ They produce a mature egg cell once a month (ovulation).

## The fallopian tubes...

...are two thin tubes between 10 to 15 cm long that connect the uterus to the ovaries which receive the ovules. The fecundation takes place in there. The fertilized egg then goes down to the uterus.

## The female cycle...

...is the time elapsed between the first day of the monthly period and the first day of the next monthly period. The cycle can last from 21 to 35 days. Periods begin around the age of 11 to 15 and ends between the age of 45 to 55. The end of the cycle is called the menopause.

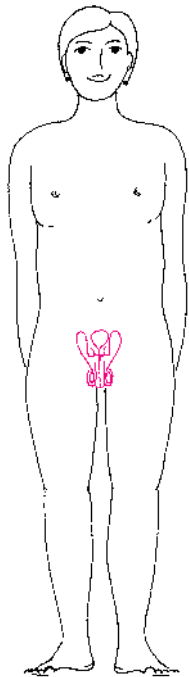
At each cycle women prepare themselves to an eventual pregnancy by the growth of the endometrium. Ovulation takes place 15 days before the next monthly period. Sexual intercourse around the time of ovulation is the best moment to get pregnant.

Ovulation does not always happen at the same moment, the safe period method is therefore not very reliable if you want to avoid a pregnancy.

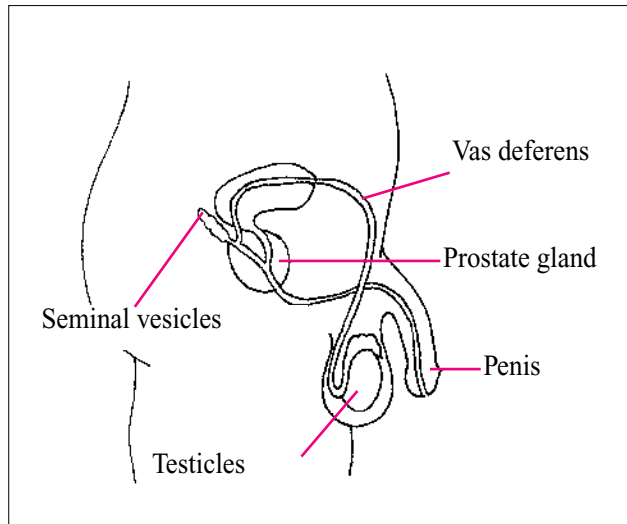
## During periods...

...you can take baths, showers and wash your hair. You can also have exercise and go swimming with tampons.

# Male genital organs



The outer part of the male genital organs (sex) are the penis and two testicles. The inner parts are the vas deferens, the prostate gland and the seminal vesicles.



## The testicles...

...have two functions:

- ◆ Constant production of spermatozoa from puberty until death.
- ◆ Production of male hormone.

From each testicle the vas deferens carry the spermatozoa to the penis.

## The penis...

... allows the passage of urine and sperm. With sexual excitement, it becomes rigid. This erection is caused by a flow of blood and it permits the penetration of the penis into the vagina.

## The sperm...

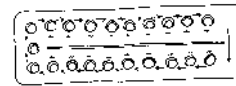
...is constituted of spermatozoa and a liquid produced by the prostate and the seminal vesicles. Ejaculation is when sperm spurts out of the penis.

### Important!

During erection and before ejaculation, the penis discharges a liquid that may contain spermatozoa. Withdrawing before ejaculation will therefore not keep you from getting pregnant. For the same reason, if you use condoms, they must be put on before any contact between the vulva and the penis.

# Contraception

There is no perfect method of contraception. Therefore it is important that you choose a method which is convenient to you and which corresponds to your needs. In this booklet, you find a short presentation of different methods available in Switzerland, their prices, effectiveness and how or where you can get them. You will get further information in a family planning center (free) or at your doctor's. Do not hesitate to write down all the questions you have and take an appointment.



The pill is a hormonal contraceptive. Taken everyday and at the same time of the day it is very reliable. If you forget it for more than 12 hours after the moment you are supposed to take it, its contraceptive effect is no more guaranteed.

## Oestroprogestative Pill

"Pill"

- ◆ Usually taken with a break of 6 to 7 days after 21 or 22 pills. (Some pills are taken without a break.) Periods come during the break and contraception is guaranteed all along.
- ◆ Important! The break must not go on more than is prescribed.

## Progestative Pill

"Minipill"

- ◆ There is no monthly break: at the end of the pack you go on directly with the next one, even in case of bleeding.
- ◆ The monthly period may disappear, shorten or become irregular.
- ◆ It can be taken during breastfeeding.
- ◆ Some brands of minipill have to be taken everyday at the same exact time, forgetting the pill for more than two hours may be risky.

**Where to find it?** You need a medical prescription to buy the "pill" or the "minipill" in any drugstore. There are several types of pills, each with a different composition. It must be prescribed by a doctor who will make sure that it suits you and change it in case of problems.

**Price:** Between 15 fr. to 25 fr. per monthly course.

## Coil/Loop



It is a small plastic device about 2.5 to 3.5 cm long around which a copper thread is rolled. It is fitted in the uterus by a doctor. On its end, there is a nylon thread with which the doctor can take it out.

- ◆ Modern coils are changed every 5 years.
- ◆ They are normally proposed to women who have already undergone pregnancy.
- ◆ See you doctor in case of any abnormalities, pains or missed periods.

**Where to find it?** Coils can be fitted only by trained doctors in the course of a consultation.

**Price:** Between 80 fr. to 250 fr. (fitting included).  
There is also a type of IUD diffusing progesterone (about 280 fr. plus the fitting).

## Contraceptive injection

The contraceptive injection (or Depo Provera) is made every 10-12 weeks in a medical service.

- ◆ Contraceptive injections can sometimes cause irregular bleeding which can reduce or often completely stop the monthly period.
- ◆ Usually, when you stop Depo Povera, monthly periods come back and you can become pregnant again but it is possible that you have to wait a few months to recover both periods and fecundity.

**Price:** 35 fr. per product.

## Hormonal implant

The **under-skin** implant is placed and withdrawn by the doctor under a local anaesthesia. It is effective during three years and the result starts 8 hours after its introduction.

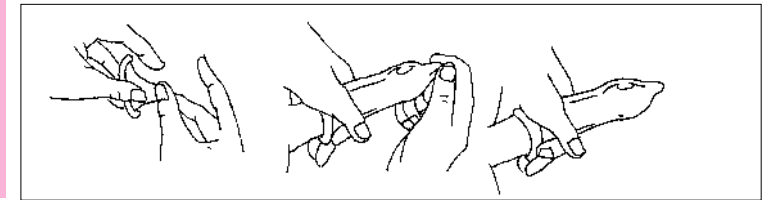
- ◆ It's a short plastic stick containing a progestative hormone. It is placed by the doctor under the skin of the inner part of the arm. It is nearly invisible but one can feel it just under the skin.
- ◆ The implant can provoke irregular periodical bleedings or stop them completely.
- ◆ Return to fertility is in principal immediate after the removal of the implant.

**Price:** 330 fr. for the product.

## Male condom

Several sizes and models exist. Only those which have the "OK", "CE", "MD" or "NF" symbol are safe. This method requires the cooperation of your partner.

- ◆ Insist on using it for all sexual intercourse and even when you have your periods.
- ◆ If it splits, slips or remains in the vagina, ask for an **emergency contraception** to avoid becoming pregnant.



**Where to find them?** One can find them easily at any drugstore or a supermarket.

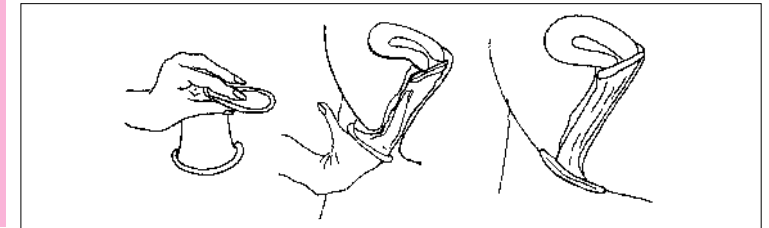
**Price:** Between 0.50 fr. to 2 fr. each.

Male and female condoms are the only contraceptives which protect against sexually transmitted infections and Aids.

## Female condom

The female condom or Femidom is a thin membrane wich you place in the inner side of the vagina.

To be used for each sexual relation and put before penetration. It can be used only once.



**Where to find it?** Femidom can be easily bought at any drugstore or supermarket.

**Price:** About 10 fr. for 3.

## Emergency contraception



Also known as the “irritation pill”. It is taken if pregnancy is not desired and only in case of emergency

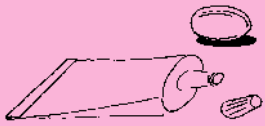
- ◆ If the condom splits or slips
- ◆ If you have forgotten the pill after a sexual intercourse
- ◆ After having a sexual relation without contraception
- ◆ After using unreliable contraception methods.

It has to be taken as soon as possible and at last within 3 days (72 hours) after having unprotected sex.

**Where to find it?** At the drugstore without prescription (since 2002). You can also ask for help at the hospital or at your family planning center.

**Price:** about 30 fr.

## Spermicides



Spermicide is a chemical product which destroys spermatozoa. It is placed at the bottom of the vagina before a sexual relationship. Except for Benzaltex it should always be used with a condom or a diaphragm.

There are different types of spermicides exist in different forms: cream, vaginal ovules or sponge. Read the instructions on the packing.

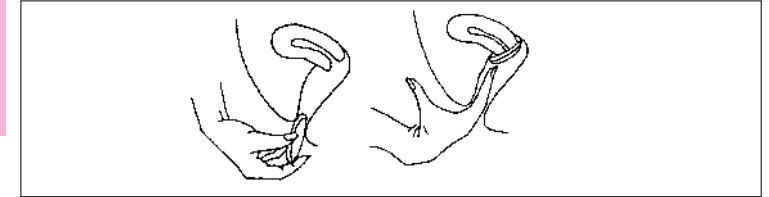
**Where to find them?** At the drugstore.

**Price:** 1.- fr. per application (in tubes).  
4.- fr. for a tampon.

## Diaphragm and cap



It is a circular dome made of soft rubber with a flexible rim. You can put it yourself, making sure it covers your cervix. It must always be used with a spermicide.



**Where to find it?** A medical consultation is necessary to determine which size of diaphragm and to learn how to insert it. It can be bought at any drugstore and used until it starts to wear.

**Price:** Between 30 fr. to 35 fr. (per diaphragm).

## Symptothermal method

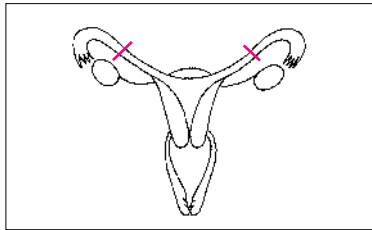
This method is based on women’s observation of the signs that accompany the fecund as well as the unproductive times of women’s cycles.

On fecund periods, you can either not have sexual relations or use a barrier contraceptive.

To become familiar with this method both partners need to be motivated and to collaborate.

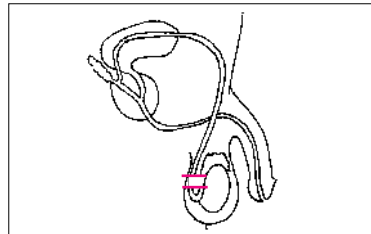
## Male and female sterilisation

This is the only definitive method. It is the most reliable method and is advised to couples who have decided not to have any more children. Advice and information is available in family planning centers for couples considering this method of contraception.



- ◆ Female sterilisation. The cycles follow up and women have their normal monthly period. Women's sexual life does not change.

- ◆ Male sterilisation. The vasectomy does not change the quality of intercourse, erection, orgasm and ejaculation. For a few weeks after the sterilization a safe method of contraception should be used, until the sperm no longer contains spermatozoa.



**Where to obtain a sterilisation?** For women: This is a surgical intervention performed by a surgeon or a gynaecologist and therefore hospitalization is necessary. For men: It is performed in a out patient sector by a urologist or a surgeon.

**Price:** Sterilisation is not undertaken by the basic health insurance. The process for men is simpler and less expensive. Ask your doctor's advice.

## Unreliable methods

If you want to avoid becoming pregnant, Do not use the following methods. **They are unreliable methods.**

### Calculating or Ogino-Knauss method...

...is not a very reliable method as a woman's body is not a clock, and therefore ovulation can be delayed by sickness, emotional shock and tiredness.

### Withdrawal method...

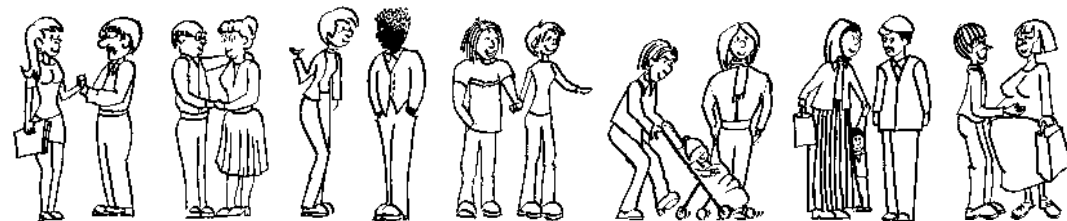
...is not a very safe method as the man may not be able to withdraw at the right moment and because a secretion containing spermatozoa is possible before ejaculation.

### Spermicides...

...spermicides alone are not efficient enough, beside Benzaltex. They should be used with a condom or a diaphragm.

### Douching or vaginal shower...

...is not a very safe method as the spermatozoa are very fast and can enter the uterus in a matter of seconds.



# Questions - Answers

## «Can I get pregnant when I stop contraception?»

Male and female sterilization are the only permanent methods. With all other contraceptives, you can become pregnant again as soon as you stop using them or rapidly after. After the contraceptive injection, it normally takes some more time: generally 5 to 12 months.

## «Which are the most efficient methods?»

No method is 100 percent efficient but **efficiency depends on the correct use** of the contraceptive. Inform yourself precisely and follow the indications.

- ✓ **Safest methods:** Male and female sterilisation, contraceptive injections, hormonal coil, implant.
- ✓ **Very safe methods:** The pill, the coil and the minipill.
- ✓ **Safe methods:** Male and female condoms, diaphragm, the sympto-thermal method and spermicides Benzaltex.
- ✗ **Not very safe method:** Ogino-Knauss method, withdrawal method, vaginal shower and spermicides.

## «Which contraceptive should I use while breast-feeding?»

After delivery, ovulation may occur, therefore you can become pregnant straight after child birth and before the return of your periods.

If you do not want another pregnancy immediately use a contraception!

The following contraceptive methods do not reduce the flow of milk and are not dangerous for the infant.

- ◆ The condom.
- ◆ The progestative pill ("minipill")
- ◆ The contraceptive injection «Depo Provera».
- ◆ From the third month of breast feeding: the coil and the implant.

The spermicide Benzaltex can also be used while breast-feeding. Inform yourself of its use.

# Your rights

All women of all nationalities have the right to be informed and taken care of. You have the right to understand all the explanations given by doctors. Do not hesitate to ask questions and if necessary to write them down before your appointments. If you have difficulties expressing yourself or understanding, you can take someone to translate along with you. Certain services work with interpreters, inform yourself.

You can be accompanied by a family member or a friend in all your visits at the doctor's or at the family planning center.

For women who have sexual relationships, it is advised to have yearly gynaecological check ups. If you don't want to go to a male gynaecologist you certainly can find a female one in your region.

For contraception, it is up to you to find a suitable method and to change it according to the course of your life and your beliefs.

In Switzerland one is obliged to have a health insurance. For foreigners without a residence permit, it is also possible to get a health insurance.

### If you have a health insurance...

...the following charges are undertaken:

- ✓ **Consultations:** All medical and gynaecological visits will be refunded with the exception of deductible amounts and your participation in charges.
- ✓ **Maternity:** All visits to your gynaecologist during pregnancy, 7 visits to the midwife, delivery charges, all the controls done by the midwife during 10 days after delivery and 3 breast-feeding consultations are fully refunded by the health insurance with the exception of deductible amounts and your participation in charges.
- ✓ **Termination of pregnancy (abortion):** All charges undertaken for a pregnancy termination are refunded by the health insurance with the exception of deductible amounts and your participation in charges.
- ✗ **Contraceptives:** All contraceptives (condoms, pill, coil, etc) are at your expense.

### If you do not have a health insurance...

... enquire about the medical treatment that you will have to pay. In case of difficulties, you can refer to social services.

### Benefits allowed in case of necessity:

In ZH, LU, GL, ZG, FR, SG, GR, TI, VD and NE cantons after childbirth, mothers or parents in need are entitled to benefits. Get in touch with either family planning centers, Pregnancy consultation centers or social services.

# Sexually transmitted diseases

## What are sexually transmitted diseases?

- ◆ These diseases are mostly transmitted during sexual intercourse from one partner to the other. They can affect the genital organs as well as the other parts of the body.
- ◆ Used properly, condoms provide a very effective barrier against most sexually transmitted diseases (STD's).
- ◆ Delaying treatment can have harmful consequences on your health and fecondity. For most of them efficient treatments exist.

## Types of sexually transmitted diseases

There are many types of sexually transmitted diseases.

- ◆ Genital warts, Chlamydia, genital herpes, Gonorrhoea (or the clap), Trichomonas vaginalis (TV), Syphilis (the pox), HIV (Human Immunodeficiency Virus), Hepatitis, infections.

## How to avoid sexually transmitted diseases?

If any one of the above infections are diagnosed by your doctor, it is important to advise your sexual partner(s). A medical check up is necessary even if he (or she) has no symptoms.

Avoid sexual intercourse until the end of your treatment.

Regarding Aids (HIV), follow "Safer Sex" rules given in this booklet.

**Sexual Transmitted Diseases have different symptoms, sometimes they are very discreet, sometimes there are no symptoms.**

**If you observe the following symptoms immediately go to your doctor or to a health clinic, a family planning or a Aids center.**

## Women

- ◆ Spots, warts, rashes, sores blisters or pain in the genital area.
- ◆ An unusually thick or watery, cloudy or smelly discharge from the vagina.
- ◆ A pain or burning sensation when you pass urine.
- ◆ Abnormal bleeding apart from the monthly period.
- ◆ Pelvic pain which is not related to the monthly period.

## Men

- ◆ Spots, warts, rashes, sores, blisters or pain in the genital area.
- ◆ A pain or burning sensation when you pass urine.
- ◆ A discharge from the penis.

Insist on using a condom

- ◆ if you change partners
- ◆ if you have several partners

what ever the method you use.



# AIDS

Aids is caused by HIV virus. It weakens the body's imunitary system and its resistance to infections or other diseases. There is yet no vaccine and actual treatments are heavy and not fully efficient. Prevention is the only mean to protect yourself from HIV.

## How is the Aids virus transmitted?

- ◆ By sexual intercourse (vaginal, anal or oral) without a condom with someone who has HIV.
- ◆ By using needles infected with HIV.
- ◆ During pregnancy, at birth and while breastfeeding, a seropositive mother can infect her baby.
- ◆ By transfusion of infected blood or by blood products. Today in Switerland there is almost no risk.

## How to avoid all risks of infection?

By following the rules of SAFER SEX:

- ◆ Insist on the use of condom for every vaginal or anal sex.
- ◆ Avoid cunnilingus (stimulation of the vulva by mouth and tongue) during the monthly period.
- ◆ Avoid semen in the mouth and do not swallow it.

For those who inject drugs, always use your own material and never re-use it.

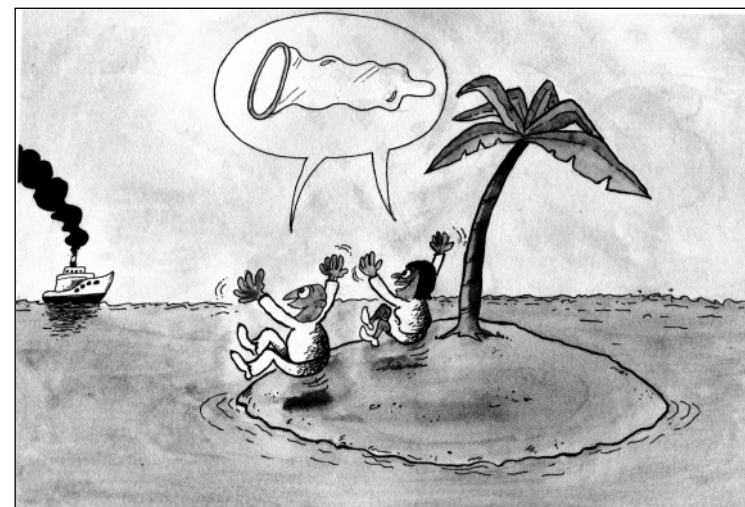
### Warning !

Don't forget that anybody can be an HIV carrier no matter how much you know this person or whatever his well-to-do appearances.

## How to detect a HIV infection?

You can pass a test 3 months after the last unprotected sexual relation. You do not have to be referred by your GP for the test. Certain centers propose anonymous tests. You can also pass it at your GP, at an Aids unit, at hospitals, and at certain family planning centers.

The price of the test varies between 30.- fr. to 90.- fr. You pay for the anonymous test, other tests can be refunded by health insurance.



Muammer Kotbaş / AIDS Savaşım Derneği / Istanbul

Male and female condoms protect you from Aids and sexually transmitted infections.

### Condom on the male side

Put it on before penetration. Take the condom out of the pack carefully. Do not use your teeth. Watch out for rings and sharp finger nails which can split the condom. Hold the condom by the reservoir tip between your thumb and forefinger. No air should be trapped in the tip.

Now place the condom over the penis head so that it can be rolled down the penis. Use only the lubricants for condoms (without fat or oil). Never use body lotion, massage oil or vaseline.

After ejaculation, the man must withdraw from the vagina before he loses his erection.

Do not expose condoms to heat, sun and do not keep them in a wallet.

Use a new condom everytime you have sex and never re-use it.

# Pregnancy

If your periods are late and you think you could be pregnant you can use a **pregnancy test** just after a few day of delay. The test detects if urine contains pregnancy hormone. You can buy a test kit at the drugstore and do it yourself at home or have it done at your GP or at certain family planning centers.

## During pregnancy

...

...it is better to have regular controls at the gynaecologist or by a midwife.

You can get more information from a midwife on pregnancy, nutrition, delivery. She will also give you the necessary advices on baby care, breast-feeding and baby nutrition. She will also visit both you and your baby at home.

You can also prepare for childbirth by attending classes. These courses can be taken in group with other future parents.

Certain drugs are not suitable for pregnant women. Find out from you GP. Alcohol and smoking is harmful for the baby during pregnancy and while breast feeding.

## You can have sex...

...while pregnant if there is no complications. In case of any doubts talk to your midwife or your GP. Good communication between you and your partner is the key to a harmonious pregnancy and will help you to adapt your sexual life to the development of your pregnancy.



## Questions ?

If you have any **questions or problems during your pregnancy** concerning your job, insurance, health, family life, money etc get in touch with a family planning center or Pregnancy consultation center. You will be heard and advised in a discrete and confidential manner. The consultations are free.

## If your pregnancy is unintended...

...and you are thinking of an abortion (termination of pregnancy) talk to a trustworthy person without any delay. Many women have faced this decision of whether keep on pregnancy or interrupt it. Family planning centers will inform you and answer all your queries. Further information is available on this subject in the following chapter.



# Termination of pregnancy (abortion)

Under Swiss law, all pregnant women can obtain a medical pregnancy interruption, which must take place within 12 weeks following the beginning of the last monthly periods. If you consider interrupting your pregnancy, you should rapidly make an appointment with a doctor or at a family planning center. You will have to confirm your decision by signing a written query for termination of pregnancy saying that you are in distress. After 12 weeks only a medical statement can attest that the pregnancy puts the mother's health in danger.

If you are pregnant and cannot or do not desire to go on with the pregnancy, contact a family planning center or your GP with no further delay.

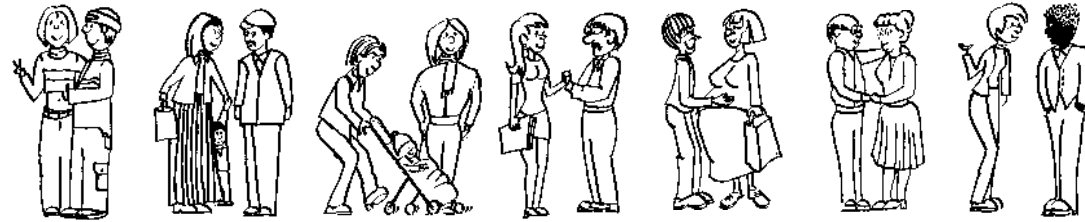
Hospitalization varies from 1 to 3 days. For early pregnancy, certain medical cabinets, hospital centers or health clinics perform the intervention without hospitalization.

**Where to get information and help?** In a Pregnancy advisory service, or a family planning center. You will find professional advice by people who are there to help you, listen to you, support you and give you the necessary information, all which are free.

**How does it go?** The pregnancy interruption is performed in hospital or at a doctor's. It can be done in an out patient sector. The surgical method by aspiration is the most common one. A drug method exists and can be taken within the first 7 weeks of pregnancy (outpatient treatment of Mifégyne and prostaglandin followed by several medical check-ups).

**How much does it cost?** The termination of pregnancy (abortion) is a medical act and therefore the charges are undertaken by the insurance companies. If you do not have an insurance, consult a pregnancy advisory service, family planning center or the hospital's social service.

# Impressum



## Impressum

Brochüre für Migrantinnen in der Schweiz /  
Englisch :  
PLANeS Schweizerische Stiftung für  
sexuelle und reproductive Gesundheit.  
Lausanne, Neuauflage 2003.

## Conception and Text

Catherine Stangl  
Sonia Damián  
Nurşen Demirkan-Güvenç  
Susana Lara  
Miradje Maliqi  
Lutka Keller

In collaboration with OFSP Office fédéral  
de la santé publique

## Graphism

Anne Monard

## Kontakt

PLANeS, av. de Beaulieu 9,  
Case postale 313, 1000 Lausanne 9  
Tel. ++ 41 21 661 22 33  
Fax ++ 41 21 661 22 34  
info@Plan-s.ch  
www.plan-s.ch

## Acknowledgements

Promotion Santé Suisse  
OFSP - BAG  
FNUAP  
Loterie romande  
Fondation Stanley Thomas Johnson  
Fédération des coopératives Migros  
Caritas Suisse  
Canton de Genève  
Aids-Hilfe Schweiz

## Order

You can get this "Brochüre" free of charge at:

Aids Info Docu Schweiz  
Postfach 5064  
Spisergasse 29  
3001 Bern  
e-mail: bestellungen@aid.ch  
www.aidsnet.ch  
Tel. 031 318 32 70  
Fax 031 311 05 65

Languages available: German, French,  
Italian, English, Spanish, Portuguese,  
Turkish, Albanian, Croatian, Arabic,  
Tamoul.

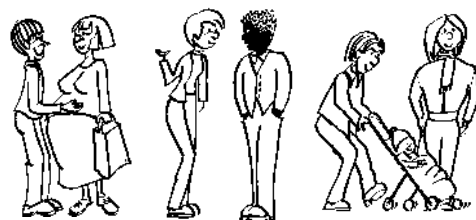
# Bestellung - Commandes - Prenotazioni

Broschüre für Migrantinnen in der Schweiz  
Brochure pour les femmes migrantes

|               |   | Number |
|---------------|---|--------|
| Englisch      | Couple, Contraception, Aids...          | .....  |
| Albanisch     | Çiftet, Mbrojtja nga shtatzënia...      | .....  |
| Arabisch      | ... فقدان المناعة المكتسبة ( إيدز ) ... | .....  |
| Kroatisch     | Partnerstvo, Kontracepcija, Aids...     | .....  |
| Portugiesisch | Casal, Contrcepção, Sida...             | .....  |
| Tamil         | தாம்பத்தியம், கருத்தடைமுறைகள்...        | .....  |
| Türkisch      | Birlikte yaşam, Doğum kontrolü...       | .....  |
| Spanisch      | Pareja, Anticoncepción, Sida...         | .....  |
| Deutsch       | Partnerschaft, Verhütung, Aids...       | .....  |
| Français      | Couple, Contraception, Sida...          | .....  |
| Italiano      | Coppia, Contraccezione, Aids..          | .....  |



Aids Info Doku Schweiz - Sida Info Doc Suisse  
Postfach 5064  
Speichergasse 29  
3001 Bern  
e-mail : [bestellungen@aid.ch](mailto:bestellungen@aid.ch)



[www.aidsnet.ch](http://www.aidsnet.ch)  
Broschüre für Migrantinnen  
Brochure pour les femmes migrantes  
Information material in English and other languages