

SPONSORED BY EXELTIS

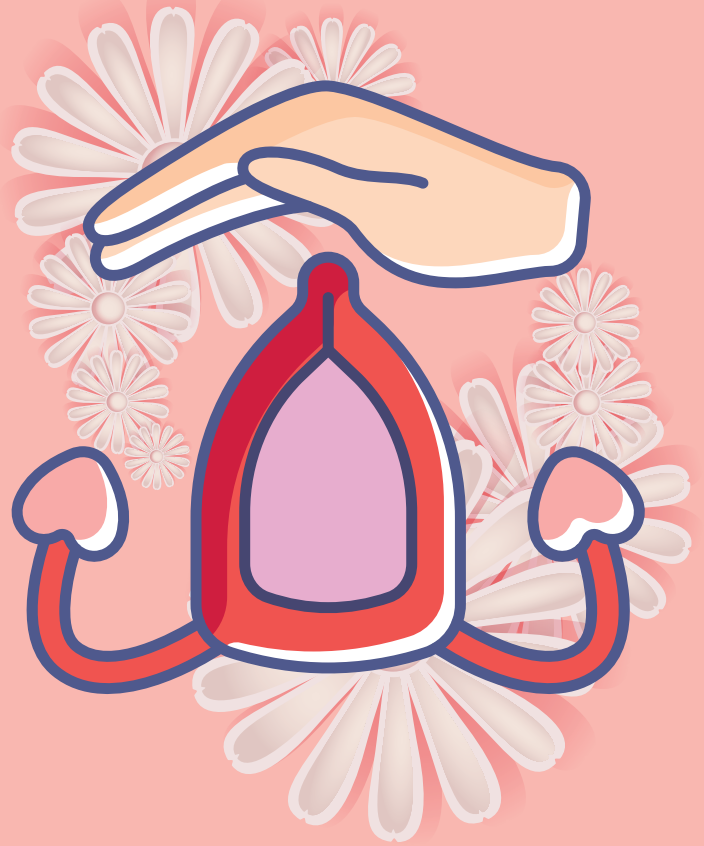
WOMENHEART



Your heart health team can help you decide what's best for you.

Many factors can impact the best option for you, including your goals, health history, and any medications or supplements you may be taking.

For women with heart disease, contraceptive and pregnancy planning are essential to optimize your health. Deciding the type of birth control to use involves careful consideration of factors such as the contraceptive's safety, effectiveness, and importantly, your preference.



BIRTH CONTROL & HEART DISEASE



WOMENHEART

THE NATIONAL COALITION FOR
WOMEN WITH HEART DISEASE



P 202.728.7199 | womenheart.org

WOMENHEART: The National Coalition for Women with Heart Disease is the nation's first and still only patient centered organization serving millions of American women living with or at risk for heart disease — the leading cause of death in women. WomenHeart is solely devoted to advancing women's heart health through advocacy, community education, and the nation's only patient support network for women living with heart disease. WomenHeart is both a coalition and a community of thousands of members nationwide, including women heart patients and their families, physicians, and health advocates, all committed to helping women live longer, healthier lives. To learn more or to donate visit womenheart.org.

BIRTH CONTROL & HEART DISEASE

Birth control for women with heart disease falls into **three main categories** — each with its own unique list of pros and cons.

1 Hormonal options:



Many oral contraceptives have a combination of two hormones — **estrogen** and **progestin**. These options are effective at preventing pregnancy and can have the added benefit of more regular periods. Estrogen should be used with caution in some women because it can increase the risk of blood clots.

- Combined oral contraceptive pill
- Combined hormonal vaginal ring

PROGESTIN-ONLY BIRTH CONTROL: Progestins are associated with lower blood clotting risk than estrogen-containing methods and are considered safe for women with heart disease.

- There are different estrogen-free pills on the market (sometimes referred to as the “mini-pill”). While some must be taken at the same time of day to be optimally effective, there is a newer pill that offers a bit more flexibility with similar effectiveness.
- Depo-Provera, known as “the shot,” can last up to 3 months.

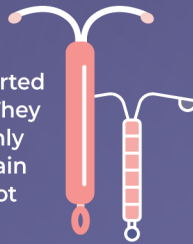
Estrogen generally should be avoided by women with:



- History of blood clots (thrombosis) or a known blood clot disorder
- Poor heart function
- Pulmonary hypertension
- History of heart attack or stroke
- Smokers over age 35
- Uncontrolled high blood pressure

2 Long-Acting Reversible Contraception:

- **Progestin implant** is generally inserted in the upper arm and can last years.
- **Intrauterine devices, or IUDs**, are devices inserted into the uterus by a doctor to prevent pregnancy. They are safe for women with heart disease and are highly effective at preventing pregnancy. Most IUDs contain some active progestin, although copper IUDs do not contain any hormones.



3 Permanent Option:

Tubal ligation (getting your “tubes tied”) is only for women who no longer want to have children and for some women with heart conditions where the risk of becoming pregnant is too high.



Other important factors:

- **Emergency contraception** should be used to prevent pregnancy in cases of unprotected intercourse or contraceptive failure. A copper IUD inserted within 7 days of unprotected intercourse is 99% effective at preventing pregnancy. All forms of emergency contraception are safe in women with heart disease.
- Women who use estrogen-containing birth control and smoke are 10 times more likely to have a heart attack and 3 times more likely to have a stroke. Risk increases substantially for women age 35 years or older who smoke heavily (15 or more cigarettes daily).



- Estrogen-containing birth control pills have also been connected to higher blood pressure in some women. Stopping combination birth control may improve blood pressure and potentially reduce your risk for a heart attack and/or stroke.



WOMENHEART



Minneapolis
Heart Institute
Foundation

WOMENHEART.ORG