

Non-surgical contraception options for men: New methods coming? ^[1]

Alice,

I have been doing some research on the web about Male Contraceptives. My girlfriend can't use hormonal methods, and we don't want to use surgery or inserts. Can you give me any info on non-surgical/non-drug male methods, such as MSR, MPU, Shug, etc...? I can't find anything on the availability of these methods. Thank you.

Answer

Dear Reader,

Research on new forms of male contraception, unfortunately, has yet to produce any methods besides condoms and vasectomy that are approved and on the market.

The methods you mention in your question ? medical-grade silicone rubber (MSR), medical-grade polyurethane (MPU), and the Shug ? are all still experimental methods that focus on blocking sperm from leaving the penis, similar to vasectomy. While they don't require surgery to insert, MSR and MPU do involve injecting 'plugs' of one type or another into the vas deferens, and they may involve surgery to remove the plugs when a man wants to be fertile again. At the present time, only men participating in clinical trials have access to these and other new methods. Complications have been infrequent and minor, although it seems that many men may take up to one or two years after removal before regaining full fertility.

The Shug differs from MSR and MPU since it is inserted in solid form made of medical-grade silicone rubber. The plug is placed into the vas deferens without any incisions, becoming effective within two to three months. The Shug may work by rupturing the vas deferens, causing scar tissue to form, similar to MSR and MPU. The plug can be removed without surgery, but there is little data on the return of fertility. At this time, researchers expect a similar timeframe to that for MSR and MPU.

Another product currently in clinical trials, is Reversible Inhibition of Sperm Under Guidance (RISUG). A polymer is injected into the vas deferens and solidifies on the tube wall within 72 hours. Instead of blocking sperm, the RISUG actually ruptures the cell membranes of sperm passing by, leaving them unable to fertilize an egg. It appears that a single injection can provide up to ten years of contraceptive use. The compound is removed by flushing the vas deferens with solvent, and fertility should be restored. There seem to be few complications

and side effects yet observed.

Some of the more widely researched, and possibly more widely supported, methods include hormonal contraception for men, which could be taken as pills, through a skin patch, or through injections. These methods are in clinical trials in many countries and may be on the market in the next few years. Check out [Male birth control pills ? Available?](#) [2] for more information. Also, take a look at [Five kinds of condoms: A guide for consumers](#) [3] for general information and the [Go Ask Alice! Sexual and Reproductive Health](#) [4] archives for an array of [Q&As on condoms](#) [5]. Remember, of all the existing and new methods for men, only condoms will provide protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

More men and women are expressing interest in male-directed contraceptives; hopefully there will be new methods on the market in the next few years. We'll be on the lookout!

Alice!

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