

## Conversation Starter Guide

### Questions to ask yourself before the discussion

#### What qualities does my 'ideal' contraceptive have?

You might like being in control of the routine associated with taking a daily contraceptive, or you might like the idea of not needing to remember to take it on a daily basis to be effective. You might not have time for regular check-ups with a healthcare professional, or you might be reassured by visiting them regularly. You might prefer a method with a lower dose, or absolutely no hormones. You might also like a contraceptive that returns fertility to your normal levels after stopping, or you might prefer a method that can maintain, reduce or possibly stop your monthly period. As a first step, it's important to work out what you really want from your contraceptive.

#### Is my current contraceptive meeting these 'ideals'?

If the answer to this is 'no' or 'only some' then you might like to consider an alternative. There are 15 different methods available from which to choose – from daily oral methods to longer-acting, reversible methods that can last from eight weeks up to ten years – there are plenty of options that might suit your needs better than the method you might be taking. Don't settle for a contraceptive that you might not be happy with.

When planning to visit your doctor or nurse about contraception, being well prepared with a list of questions can help you to optimise the conversations you have and ensure that you get the most out of the time you have with them. Consider writing everything down, or even taking this list with you to make sure that all of your concerns, if any, are covered:



#### Questions to consider asking your doctor or nurse

- How effective are the methods?
- How do they work?
- What are the differences between certain methods?
- How easy are they to use?
- How regularly do I need to take or use them?
- How long do the methods last?
- How often will I need to return to the practice to maintain the method or have check-ups?
- If I change my mind, how can they be discontinued?
- What are the possible side effects?
- When will my fertility return to normal levels after use has stopped?
- What impact will they have on my periods?
- Can I continue to breastfeed?



In order for your doctor to prescribe you the contraceptive most suited to your needs, you should be prepared to answer a few key questions about your medical history and lifestyle. For example you might be asked if you have used contraception in the past, if you are sexually active, or, if you currently have a long-term partner.