

ANA'S STORY



I won't forget what has happened in my life. I haven't got a husband because my husband died in Johannesburg. I met a man with no wife. I stayed together with him at Kwa-Mashu with his children and his grandchild. But he didn't like my children, saying they finish food. He refused to have them written in the file for the house and to get them a permit.

I stayed being worried about my children. He called my children snakes. He once said, "I won't grow these snakes which are going to hit me tomorrow."

One day when I was at work in Montclair, one of the women told me about Lindelani. Then the following Saturday we went there and got a site for myself. The following Sunday I bought some building materials at Microl Timbers. I haven't got money to buy corrugated iron so I have to stay in this little house of boards.

One day rain came and flooded and the water got into the house. I woke up at night. Idug drains inside my house so that the water must go out. The side of the house came off and the roof was off with the wind. And now it's still like that because I am trying to buy the stuff to build a roof. The sides of the house, I'll make from mud. Every Saturday and Sunday I do this work. ■

CONTRACEPTION CHART

The Health articles in previous SPEAK's have looked at the different forms of contraception in detail. The table here gives a summary of the different contraceptives. If you would like more details on these methods please write to SPEAK.

The most commonly used methods of preventing pregnancy are often not safe for our health. We are forced to choose between these uncomfortable or harmful side effects and unwanted pregnancy.



**WE
DEMAND ...**

In the long term we must demand safe forms of contraception for women. But in the meanwhile we must know what different methods are available and how they work on our bodies, so that we can choose the method that suits us best.

What is it?	How Does it work?	Is it easy to get?
Condom. A rubber bag which fits over the penis and stops sperm from entering the woman's body.	It has no harmful side effects on either woman or man.	Easy to get at clinics Also available at chemist but quite expensive. It prevents pregnancy 99 out of 100 women
Withdrawal Withdrawing or taking the penis out of the vagina before the fluid comes out (ejaculation).	Not good at preventing pregnancy -drops of fluid always come out of the penis before ejaculation and could cause pregnancy.	Can be practised by any couple at any time.
Rhythm A woman calculates at what part of the month she can fall pregnant. At this time of the month she does not have sex, or she uses some other form of contraception.	There are no dangers to a woman's health but this is a difficult method to use and it is easy to fall pregnant when using it.	Can be practised by any woman at any time.
tubal ligation The tubes through which the egg travels from the ovaries to the womb are cut and tied.	The operation is done under general anaesthetic and has all the risks any operation has. Otherwise it does not harm women. It is permanent and a woman can't have any more children.	Easy to get if a woman is over 25 and has three children.
vasectomy A small operation done without general anaesthetic. The man's sperm tubes are cut and tied.	The operation is safe and there are no serious side effects. It is permanent and the man can't have any more children.	Easy to get if a man is over 30 and has three children.

What is it?

How Does it work?

Is it easy to get?

Pill



Come in packs of 28 pills. One pill is taken every day until the end of the pack, and then a new pack is used. The pill has hormones which stop an egg from being made.

Most women who use contraceptives use the pill. For some women it works well but many do suffer side effects like headaches, nausea. Also if you miss a pill you may fall pregnant. Women with conditions like high blood pressure, heart trouble should not take the pill.

Easy to get at clinics. A nurse or doctor should discuss a woman's health condition with her before putting her on the pill. It prevents pregnancy in 90 to 98 out of 100 women.

Loop



A small plastic object, sometimes covered with copper wire. It fits into the womb.

Some women have no problems with the loop, but some do suffer side effects like heavy bleeding. Some women find that their womb can't hold the loop in.

Easy to get at clinics. Has to be put in by a nurse or doctor. Prevents pregnancy in 96 out of 100 women.

Injection



(depo-provera)

An injection is given to the woman every 3 months. It has hormones which stop an egg being made.

The injection has been found to have harmful side effects for women and has been banned in some countries. It is believed that use of the injection for a long time could be a cause of cancer. But for some women who can't take the pill or the loop, the injection is the only thing.

Easy to get at clinics. Prevents pregnancy in 90 to 95 out of 100 women.

Diaphragm.



A rubber cap which is put into the vagina and stops sperm from entering the womb.

It has no harmful side effects on either man or woman.

Very difficult to get from clinics and very expensive. Prevents pregnancy in 98 out of 100 women.

USING A MENSTRUAL CALENDAR

We all know that having periods is not just bleeding for a few days every month. For many of us it also means swollen ankles, depression, tension, irritability, stomach cramps, headaches, tiredness with every cycle. But we don't usually prepare ourselves for all this.



Why is it important to be aware of these things? Mostly it is important to know what is happening to your body because it makes it more easy to deal with and just knowing why something happens helps.

Filling in a menstrual calendar can make us more active and aware about dealing with tension before a period and with the other discomforts that go with periods. It can also help the people we live with realise that the menstrual cycle is a very real part of our lives, affecting us in a very real way.

MORE PARTICULAR REASONS FOR USING A MENSTRUAL CALENDAR ARE :

- * For noticing spotting (little bits of bleeding in between your monthly periods.) This usually means that something is wrong with your womb.
- * If your periods have always been regular but start to become irregular there may also be something wrong with you and you should see a doctor . For older women it may mean the beginning of menopause (change of life).
- * Ovulating is the time you can fall pregnant so it may be worthwhile to take extra precautions at this time if you want to avoid pregnancy. You ovulate in the middle of your cycle between bleeds. The mucous or white stuff from your vagina is also more sticky at this time.
- * Your periods may change as a result of the contraception you are using and this might mean you should think about using something-else.
- * By marking when your period starts every month, you will know more or less how long your monthly cycle is. This will help you to know when you have a late period which may mean that you are pregnant.■

menstrual calendar 1985

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	4		
30	31																																5
																																	6
																																	7
																																	8
																																	9
																																	10
																																	11
																																	12
																																	13
																																	14
																																	15
																																	16
																																	17
																																	18
																																	19
																																	20
																																	21
																																	22
																																	23
																																	24
																																	25
																																	26
																																	27
																																	28
																																	29
																																	30
																																	31
																																	32
																																	33



This calendar can be used to record when your period starts ; how long it lasts ; premenstrual tension and ovulation.
 Circle the date on which your period starts every month. Look at the line the circle make across the page as you fill it in. If your cycle is 28 days long the line will be straight ; if it is shorter than 28 days the line will slope upwards ; if it is longer the line will slope downwards. You ovulate about 14 days after the beginning of your period. ■