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[New Male Contraceptive Methods](#)

From IVD to anti vitamin A receptors

Contraception has always been considered primarily a woman's responsibility. Now, men have the chance to 'help with this task', so that women can get rid of pills, IUDs and diaphragms...at least if they do not want to hear "Daddy" when they least expect it. Nowadays, men have only two options: vasectomy, which in most cases is permanent, and condoms, which don't really 'match' with a long-term relationship. But new researches presented at the second conference "Future of Male Contraception" could bring in 5-10 years new revolutionary methods. A team at the University of Washington tested a hormone approach based on two items already marketed: testosterone gel, targeting men with low testosterone, and a progestin shot commercialized as the female contraceptive "DepoProvera". A shot at each 3 months combined with a daily gel rubbing eliminated sperm cells in 90 % of the 44 subjects. Still, volunteers' attitude varied greatly: 6 dropped out of the trial tests, 19 were satisfied or very satisfied, 12 were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied, and the others expressed mixed feelings. Shepherd Medical Company presented the results of their first human trial of the "Intra Vas Device" (an alternative to vasectomy): in 6 months, 92% of the subjects had no sperm or almost no sperm. The Intra Vas Device stops sperm in the vas deferens, the same tube cut in vasectomy, connecting the testicles to the urethra. The plugs can be removed to reverse the effects. Researches made on animals showed that fertility comes back if the IVD is removed after less than one year, but for longer use, this may not happen. Long-term trials checking IVD's effectiveness and fertility are required. A new investigation made at Columbia University focused on the role played by vitamin A. Extremely low amounts of vitamin A induce sterility in men, but the avitaminosis has severe health effects, too. Professor Debra Wolgemuth performed a series of tests on mice, using a drug abandoned by a pharmaceutical company because of its effect on impairing the vitamin A receptors in the testes. It proved effective in contraception, having no secondary effects. "The receptors are everywhere, but the testis is exquisitely sensitive to the drug. So we can use a dose that is so low it has no effect on the rest of the body. So the drug doesn't harm mice-- but will it be fine in men. There's extensive toxicology data in rats and rabbits -- and at much higher doses-- because industry is developing it for other uses. So we're optimistic that there would be no adverse side effects in humans as well.", said Dr. Wolgemuth. "We've seen today that the pipeline is full-- everything from new targets to actual human trials. And the demand is there-- hundreds of men have voiced their opinion on our website [MaleContraceptives.org](#) and in surveys. So it's just a question of whether policymakers act on that demand.", said Kirsten Thompson, director of the International Male Contraception Coalition. "We could have something like the IVD on the market in 4-5 years, if we make an all-out effort with funding and focus", said Elaine Lissner, director of the Male Contraception Information Project.