

Two free contraception apps for providers of family planning

These tech tools offer the opportunity to improve your family planning services

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Evidence-based research and guidelines regarding contraception are continually changing. Health care providers often have difficulty memorizing and staying up-to-date on all the important developments around family planning. Those who provide contraceptive counseling may not all use guidelines to inform their choices, and some may have misperceptions about patient eligibility for certain methods.^{1,2} Mobile health applications (apps) that present this information in an easily accessible fashion have the potential to improve family planning services.

In a search for contraception apps, Dr. Rachel Perry and colleagues identified two contraception apps that were evaluated highly: 1) the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) US Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use (MEC) app and 2) the iContraception app.³

Two free contraception apps for clinician use. Both the CDC Contraception and iContraception apps are based on CDC MEC information and provide guidance on contraceptive initiation and maintenance.⁴ Notably, the American College of Obstetricians and

Gynecologists (ACOG) endorses the use of the CDC MEC.⁵

These two apps can aid physicians in prescribing appropriate and safe contraceptive methods and can help them tailor the extensive CDC MEC guidelines for an individual patient. Additionally, the iContraception app allows a user to input multiple clinical and demographic characteristics to determine an individual patient's eligibility for a specific contraceptive method (that is, it incorporates a clinical decision tree).

The recommended contraception apps are listed in the **TABLE** (page 30) and are detailed with a shortened version of the APPLICATIONS scoring system, APPLI (app comprehensiveness, price, platform, literature used, and important special features).⁶ I hope that the apps described here will assist you in managing patients who need contraception counseling. ●

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TABLE Recommended contraception apps

App	App comprehensiveness	Price	Platform	Literature used	Important special features
 <p>CDC US Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use</p> <p>iTunes: https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/contraception/id595752188?mt=8</p> <p>Google Play: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.cdc.ondiehnccdphp.contraception2&hl=en_US</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinical decision making (clinical decision support systems, clinical treatment guidelines) Reference (drug reference guides, medical literature) 	Free	iTunes and Google Play store	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> US Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use (<i>MMWR Recomm Rep.</i> 2016;65[3]:1-103) US Selected Practice Recommendations for Contraceptive Use (<i>MMWR Recomm Rep.</i> 2016;65[4]:1-66) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes more than 60 characteristics and medical conditions that may affect people seeking family planning services Includes selected practice recommendations for contraceptive use
 <p>iContraception</p> <p>iTunes: https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/icontraception/id668520861?mt=8</p> <p>Google Play: https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.itiox.icontraception</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clinical decision making (clinical decision support systems) Reference (medical literature) 	Free	iTunes and Google Play store	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> WHO Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use, 2015 (https://www.who.int/reproductivehealth/publications/family_planning/MEC-5/en/) Other primary sources 	Clinical decision tree

Abbreviations: US MEC, US Medical Eligibility Criteria for Contraceptive Use; US SPR, US Selected Practice Recommendations for Contraceptive Use.