



Overview of Birth Control Methods

Excerpts from Care Net and the American Association of Christian Counselor's *Crisis Pregnancy Coach and Counselor Training Certification Program* (pages 38-44)

IV. Pregnancy Prevention Methods¹: *Care Net does not recommend, provide, or refer single women for contraceptives. (Married women seeking contraceptive information should be urged to seek counsel, along with their husbands, from their pastor and/or physician).²*

One of the important components of abstinence education is information about contraception. However, abstinence and sexual integrity education are not contraception promotion. This information is provided to help pregnancy center workers understand the birth control methods that clients are using. It is not intended or designed to be used for direct client education about these methods. In addition, this is not a comprehensive treatment of the subject; please refer to available references for further information.

A. Permanent³

1. In women: Tubal ligation, hysterectomy, removal of ovaries
2. In men: Vasectomy

¹Trussel, "Choosing a contraception that's right for u: comparative chart," The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada (2007),

²Care Net Pregnancy Center Standards of Affiliation, January 2012.

³American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. (2011, March). Sterilization for women and men. http://www.acog.org/Resources_And_Publications/Patient_Education_Pamphlets, Retrieved from http://www.acog.org/Resources_And_Publications/Patient_Education_Pamphlets/Files/Sterilization_for_Women_and_Men; Accessed July 13, 2012

B. Abstinence: Refraining from any form of sexual contact between individuals. This includes oral sex, body to body contact, or any intimate contact with genitals. Sexual integrity education is provided to help clients make wise decisions about sexual intimacy. The foundation of pregnancy center ministry is a biblical one, and Scripture is very clear that sexual intimacy is reserved for marriage.

1. Safe
2. Inexpensive
3. No associated risks: no risk of contracting STIs, becoming pregnant or the emotional and spiritual consequences of sex outside marriage
4. No side effects
5. It works every time

C. Natural^{4,5}: This method is associated with more than 95% effectiveness in preventing pregnancy and has no associated risks or negative side effects.

1. A woman will monitor her body through checking her temperature and/or cervical mucus.
2. Advantages:
 - Cost effective
 - No use of external hormones

⁴Pope Paul VI Institute for the study of human reproduction., "Creighton MODEL FertilityCare™ System." Last modified 2006. Accessed September 16, 2012. <http://www.creightonmodel.com>.

⁵"Natural Family Planning," ACOG Patient Education Pamphlets, APO, no. 24 (2011), http://www.acog.org/Resources_And_Publications/Patient_Education_Pamphlets/Files/Natural_Family_Planning (accessed September 16, 2012).

- Benefit of knowing body's functions more thoroughly can help with pregnancy planning

3. Potential disadvantages:

- Requires motivation to learn technique and monitor changes
- Periodic abstinence must be practiced

D. Barrier methods⁶ use a mechanical wall or road block in an attempt to prevent sperm and egg from meeting. They are often used in concert with spermicidal gels and foams to further reduce the likelihood of conception.

1. Advantages include:

- Avoid exposure to hormones
- Use just when needed
- May reduce risk of some STIs⁷
- Inexpensive

2. Disadvantages include:

- Latex allergy
- Risk of bladder infections
- Risk of vaginal irritation
- May be dislodged or broken and fail

3. Types:

⁶Trussel, "Choosing a contraception that's right for u: comparative chart," The Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada (2007)

⁷Shuford, JA. The Medical Institute for Sexual Health, "How effective are condoms in preventing STIs?." Last modified 2008. Accessed September 16, 2012. <https://www.medinstitute.org/resources/faqs/>.

- Male condom⁸: 85% effective (typical use)
- Female condom 79% effective (typical use)
- Vaginal sponge 68% effective (typical use)
- Diaphragm 84% effective (typical use)

E. Hormonal Methods^{9,10} are among the most commonly used methods of contraception due to convenience and ease of use.

1. Hormonal methods all rely on female hormones to alter a woman's natural fertility and thereby reduce the chance of pregnancy. The primary female hormones are estrogen and progesterone, both produced by the ovary during a normal menstrual cycle.
2. The hormones used in contraceptives are synthetics, created in a laboratory which when placed in a woman's body, override the natural hormones mimicking a pregnant state so that the normal signals to release an egg (and other natural cycle functions) are inhibited or blocked.
3. There are two main kinds: those that contain both an estrogen and a progestin and those that only contain a progestin. A progestin is simply a synthetic progesterone hormone.
4. Typical use is how the average woman functions with this method. Takes into account inconsistent use such as occasional missed doses, taking the pill late, etc.
5. Overall 92-99% effective (typical use).
6. Reduces the risk of uterine and ovarian cancers.¹¹

⁸Shuford, JA. The Medical Institute for Sexual Health, "FAQs: What is meant by consistent condom use?." Last modified 2009. Accessed September 16, 2012. <https://www.medinstitute.org/resources/faqs/>.

⁹Physician's Desk Reference, "Ortho Tri-cyclen concise monograph: Warnings." Last modified 2012. Accessed September 21, 2012. <http://www.pdr.net/drugpages/concisemonograph.aspx?concise=1929>

¹⁰The Physician's Desk Reference, "Yaz product labeling." Last modified 2012. Accessed September 16, 2012. <http://www.pdr.net/drugpages/productlabeling.aspx?mpcode=05959020;>

7. Can be used to treat other conditions such as heavy menses, painful periods, acne, and premenstrual syndrome.
8. The hormonal methods can be placed into a woman's blood stream through the:
 - Stomach (pill)
 - Skin (patch)
 - Vagina (ring)
 - Uterus (IUD)
 - Muscles (shot)
9. Mechanisms of Action^{12, 13, 14, 15}:
 - The primary action of hormonal methods is to suppress ovulation (the release of an egg). Prevents conception.
 - Cause changes in the cervical mucus which inhibits sperm from reaching the egg. Prevents conception.
 - May reduce the likelihood for implantation to take place. There can be no further growth without implantation and the pre-embryo will die. When in effect, this is an abortifacient action.

¹¹National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, "Oral contraceptives and cancer. ." Last modified 2012. Accessed September 17, 2012. <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Risk/oral-contraceptives>.

¹²The Physician's Desk Reference, "Yaz product labeling."

¹³WL Larimore, "Growing debate about the abortifacient effect of the birth control pill and the principle of the double effect," Journal Ethics and Medicine, 16, no. 1 (2000): 23-30, <http://www.epm.org/resources/2010/Feb/22/growing-debate-about-abortifacient-effect-birth-co/>. (accessed September 17, 2012).

¹⁴Colliton, W.F. AAPLOG, "Birth Control Pill: Abortifacient and contraceptive." Last modified 2010. Accessed September 16, 2012. <http://www.aaplog.org/position-and-papers/oral-contraceptive-controversy/birth-control-pill-abortifacient-and-contraceptive/>.

¹⁵ Crockett, SA. American Association of Pro-life OB/GYNs, "Hormone contraceptives controversies and clarifications." Last modified 1999. Accessed September 16, 2012. <http://www.aaplog.org/position-and-papers/oral-contraceptive-controversy/hormone-contraceptives-controversies-and-clarifications/>.

- Controversy exists among Christian pro-life doctors whether ALL hormonal contraceptives may prevent implantation and therefore cause an early abortion. There is no definitive proof, one way or the other, but scientific support exists on both sides of the question.
- Care Net does not validate one position over the other, but recommends each center determine how they will handle this issue.
- Care Net supports educating clients on the abortifacient potential of hormonal contraceptives and all forms of emergency contraception.
- The Food and Drug Administration continues to include the implantation effect as a possible mechanism of action in the packaging information for hormonal contraceptives¹⁶.
- The American Association of Pro life Obstetricians & Gynecologists website posts excellent position papers from each vantage point. These papers may be accessed at: <http://www.aaplog.org>. or see citation #21 and 22.

10. Side effects and Risks of Estrogen + Progestin hormonal contraception^{17, 18, 19}.

Estrogen/progesterone methods are associated with significant side effects and risks, especially in certain populations such as smokers over the age of 35, women with high blood pressure, and women with migraines. This population, in particular, is at increased risk of developing blood clots, stroke, and heart attack.

- Stroke
- Heart attack

¹⁶The Physician's Desk Reference, "Yaz product labeling."

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸Physician's Desk Reference, "Ortho Tri-cyclen concise monograph: Warnings." Last modified 2012. Accessed September 21, 2012. <http://www.pdr.net/drugpages/concisemonograph.aspx?concise=1929>

¹⁹L Ojvind , "Thrombotic stroke and myocardial infarction with hormonal contraception," New England Journal of Medicine, 366 (2012): 2257-2266

- Blood clots
- Increased risk of some cancers²⁰:
 - Cervical cancer: The increased risk of cervical cancer may be because sexually active women have a higher risk of becoming infected with Human Papillomavirus (HPV), which causes nearly all cervical cancers. Thus, it may not be the presence of hormonal contraception as much as the exposures to infections like HPV through sexual activity.
 - A fact sheet published by the National Cancer Institute (NCI) notes that a number of studies have observed an increased risk of breast cancer among current users of oral contraceptives which falls to normal 10 years after they are discontinued.
- Depression
- Increased risk of certain medical problems: including high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol and lipids, glucose intolerance, pancreatitis, gall bladder disease, cataracts, and loss of vision.
- Reduced risks of ovarian and endometrial (uterine lining) cancers.

11. Side effect of Progestin only hormonal contraception^{21, 22, 23}:

- Irregular bleeding.
- Decreased bone density (shot) which may not be wholly reversible when the shots are discontinued.

²⁰National Institutes of Health, National Cancer Institute, "Oral contraceptives and cancer. ." Last modified 2012. Accessed September 17, 2012. <http://www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/Risk/oral-contraceptives>.

²¹Physician's Desk Reference, "Depo-provera Concise Monograph." Last modified 2012. Accessed September 21, 2012. <http://www.pdr.net/drugpages/concisemonograph.aspx?concise=1124>

²²Physician's Desk Reference, "Mirena product labeling and concise monograph." Last modified 2009. Accessed September 21, 2012. <http://www.pdr.net/drugpages/productlabeling.aspx?mpcode=05954060>

²³Physician's Desk Reference, "Plan b one-step: Product labeling." Last modified 2009. Accessed September 17, 2012. <http://www.pdrnetwork.com/>. Retrieved from <http://www.pdr.net/drugpages/productlabeling.aspx?>

- Bloating, acne, mood changes, weight gain.
- Delay in return to ovulation (shot). An average delay of 9 months before regular ovulation has also been observed with this method.
- Up to 10% of pregnancies reported in clinical studies of routine use of progestin-only contraceptives are ectopic

12. Intrauterine hormonal method: Mirena IUD®^{24, 25}

- Contains levonorgestrel, a synthetic progesterone hormone
- Lasts 5 years
- Side effects: irregular bleeding, abdominal/pelvic pain, ovarian cysts
- Increased risk of: miscarriage, pelvic infection; sepsis, perforated uterus, ectopic pregnancy, pregnancy complications, death.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Cleveland Clinic: Current Clinical Medicine, 2nd ed., Section 14 Intrauterine devices, (Saunders, an imprint of Elsevier, 2010) <http://www.mdconsult.com/books/page.do?eid=4-u1.0-B978-1-4160-6643-9..00191-0--s0075&isbn=978-1-4160-6643-9&uniqId=358259647-5>