

Modern Methods of Birth Control

Almost all people wish to decide for themselves how many children to have, and when to have them. Modern methods of birth control, or family planning, allow every couple to do just that—have babies when they want them, and avoid pregnancy when they don't.

Pregnancy takes place after sex relations, when the man's sperm or seed joins with the woman's egg and attaches itself to the lining of the womb, where the new baby grows. All methods of birth control are designed to keep this from happening: to keep the new life from starting *until the parents want it to*.

Just as there is no "magic" number of children ideal for all families, there is no one method of birth control that is perfect for every couple. There are a number of different medically approved birth control methods that work differently, and that are safe and inexpensive.

You can choose the one you like best. The method you will use regularly is the one that will work best.

Your private doctor, or the doctor at a Planned Parenthood center, local health department or hospital family planning center can help you choose. This is the most reliable and safest way to pick your method. Some methods can be gotten only by seeing a doctor first. These usually give better protection against pregnancy than those bought in a drugstore without seeing a doctor. This booklet describes both kinds.

If you cannot visit a doctor, or must wait for an appointment, see page 7 for a list of products you can buy at the drugstore without a doctor's prescription.

"Doctor Methods" of Birth Control

Available Only with a Doctor's Examination and Prescription

The Pill *Oral Contraceptives*

The Pill is now being used by about seven million U.S. women. It keeps a woman's body from releasing an egg (ovulating). If there is no egg, she cannot become pregnant. Pills have to be taken on a regular monthly schedule. When the doctor prescribes the Pill, he gives you the schedule. Only the full series taken regularly gives protection. Pills taken just "once in a while" will not help. To be sure, take the pill at the same time every day.

The Pill Works Well

If you follow your doctor's directions, the Pill has a close to 100 per cent record of preventing pregnancy. One big advantage about the Pill is that it can be taken at a time separate from the sex act.

Some women taking the Pill feel a little like women do in the early part of pregnancy. They feel sick at the stomach; their breasts are tender. These side effects usually don't last long. Sometimes spotting or bleeding occurs between periods.

Careful scientific studies over the last ten years indicate that the Pills are not safe for all women, and it