

BIRTH CONTROL, ABORTION, and V.D.:

A Guide for the B. U. Student

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Birth Control Committee

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This booklet is written to give BU students an idea of what to expect and look for when choosing birth control devices and seeking abortions. Also included is information on the subject of venereal disease. Much of the information deals specifically with the Boston area. We have tried to dispel common myths and to present sources of information and advice that are not otherwise readily available and are nowhere, to our knowledge, collected in any one handy guide. We have tried to keep it simple and to the point.

We are neither condoning or condemning any particular pattern of sexual behavior. We are dealing with the realities of the present situation. Our hope is to dispel ignorance and to keep students from hurting themselves unwittingly.

This booklet was compiled by the Student Congress Birth Control Committee from information obtained from interviews with doctors and social workers; from published and unpublished materials; from our personal experience. It pretends in no way to be the last word on any of the subjects discussed herein. In fact, we found much conflicting information. This booklet represents our best understanding of the true facts.

We would like to thank our many helpful informative sources and perhaps the best way to do this is to not mention them by name. According to present Mass. State law anyone giving out information (even "hints") about birth control or abortion is subject to harsh punishment (note the case of Bill Baird). This booklet is not only a public service, but represents an act of civil disobedience.

Our thanks also goes to the dorm and school governments of BU who donated money for this publication when the Student Congress had no more due to the failure of the referendum.

It is our hope that this booklet, coupled with last year's Boston Housing and You, will begin for Congress (The Union) a yearly tradition of publishing helpful guides on topics of importance to the BU student.

BIRTH CONTROL

Several authorities have shown that people are apprehensive about using contraceptives for fear of making too strong a personal commitment in a relationship or to a new way of life. But the best advice is simple: if you are having intercourse and don't want a pregnancy, use birth control. You should know that although it is difficult for some women to get pregnant at all, others have gotten pregnant simply from sperm splashed on the genitalia. There is no way of telling what will happen in your case.

Below are explanations of the various birth control devices. Remember however, a device is only as effective as the care you take in using it properly.

A. Oral Contraceptives ("The Pill")- The pill is almost 100% effective and works by preventing ovulation in the female. It can be obtained only with a doctor's prescription. It is important that a woman use only the pills a doctor prescribes for her alone because pills vary in strength and content. What may work for one person might not for another.

The pills cost between \$16-\$33 per year plus the cost of visits to the doctor.

The pills are taken once daily at approximately the same time for 20 days each month. A few days after the last pill is taken the menstrual period should start. Nothing is taken during this lapse, but the user is still protected from pregnancy. If you decide to get pills the doctor will explain more precisely how and why they work.

Advantages-

1. often eliminates menstrual cramps, lightens menstrual flow, regulates periods
2. it is the only contraceptive that is completely independent of the sexual act

3. often clears complexions

*4. is recommended as the most effective

Disadvantages-

1. often a small weight gain of about 5lbs. (In some cases this might be an advantage!)

2. sometimes there is slight nausea or breast tenderness which usually disappears after a few months use

3. rumors of bad long term effects are still questionable

4. It is technically illegal in Mass. for doctors to prescribe this for unmarried women. However, it is not illegal to prescribe pills for other health reasons such as regulating periods and many doctors do prescribe them readily. If you go to a doctor for pills to be used for birth control, tell him this or he might give you something weaker for mere period regulation.

5. are not guaranteed effective until after the first month of use

B. The Condom (prophylactic, "rubber")- This is both an old and reliable method with effectiveness over 90%. It is a thin latex bag which covers the entire erect penis. It is usually packed ready to be unrolled onto the penis just before insertion. After intercourse it is removed with the ejaculate still inside and discarded. The three for a dollar condom is apparently just as effective as the more expensive ones, the difference being that the latter are probably thinner thus allowing for greater sensitivity.

Advantages-

1. offers protection against VD as well as pregnancy

2. since 1938 the Food and Drug Administration has been supervising standards of production

Disadvantages-

1. dulls sensations for the man

2. must be put on just prior to intercourse
3. may tear during intercourse due to excessive friction

C. The Diaphragm is held like a bowl and about a teaspoonful of contraceptive cream or jelly is applied to the inside which makes it ready for insertion into the vagina. Once inside it springs back to its round shape and the rim can be tucked behind the bone that guards the front vaginal wall where it will be beyond the reach of the penis. When properly fitted it leaves the woman unaware of its presence. Insertion can be done immediately before coitus or up to three hours in advance, but afterwards it must be left in place for at least six hours. It is removed by hooking a finger into the rim and pulling it out. A subsequent douche is not at all necessary. It should never be used without the cream or jelly. It is about 96% effective and costs \$15-\$28 per year. A girl must be fitted for a diaphragm by her doctor. Its main drawback is probably the nuisance of insertion and removal.

D. The Cervical Cap is a plastic cup very like a diaphragm only much more difficult to use (difficulties arise with insertion). Its advantage is that it can be left in place for days or even weeks. As with the diaphragm you must go to a doctor to get one.

E. The IUD (Intrauterine Device)- This is a coil of plastic inserted in the uterus which remains there for about a year. It is impractical for most college girls because:

1. unless you have had a baby already your body will probably reject it
2. it is expensive (\$35-\$100) and must be inserted by a doctor
3. since it is illegal in Mass. for unmarried women, a doctor will probably not take the legal risks for something that may not work anyway

4. it may slip out of place without the user's knowledge

F. Contraceptive foams and jellies- There are two contraceptive

foams on the market: Delfen and Emko. They are readily available without prescription in any drug store or large department store. Foams must be applied within 2 hours of intercourse, preferably right before. Users should not douche for 4 to 6 hours after the last intercourse.

Contraceptive jellies are not as effective as their foam counterparts and should only be used as a last resort if you are allergic to the foams.

G. The rhythm method (otherwise known as Vatican roulette)

is so ineffective that it shouldn't be used unless you have incredible will power or plan to have children. If you decide to use it, see a doctor for full explanation.

H. Douching is not an effective contraceptive method.

However, if unplanned intercourse takes place, it is better than nothing.

I. Withdrawal (coitus interruptus) can be used as a method

of contraception. The man must exercise a great deal of control, but even if he does execute the perfect withdrawal of his penis just before ejaculation, the woman can still be impregnated by the splashing of sperm onto her labia. It is definitely too risky a technique for use by novices. Also, some psychiatrists warn against possible harmful effects on both partners.

J. Suppositories and foaming tablets are inserted deep into

the vagina not more than an hour before each intercourse. Here it melts, releasing a spermicide to immobilize the sperm. These can be bought without a prescription in many drug stores and come with detailed instructions. A few minutes must be allowed for the tablet or suppository to melt so that it may work effectively.

- K. Combination of devices increases protection. The male's use of a condom combined with the female's use of vaginal foam is highly effective. One big advantage of this method is that both devices can be bought without prescription. We think that this is probably as good as the pill.
- L. Use of a sponge, in addition to being antiquated, can be very uncomfortable.

These are the only known methods of birth control other than abstinence. Anything else you may have heard is an old wives' tale or wishful fantasy. A "morning after pill" does not exist yet. The Consumer's Union Report on Family Planning lists the devices by effectiveness in descending order as follows:

Maximum Effectiveness

1. The pill (used with medical consultation)

Very High Effectiveness

1. Diaphragm with cream or jelly
2. Cervical cap with cream or jelly
3. Condom
4. I.U.D.
5. Rhythm with thermometer and medical consultation

High to Medium Effectiveness

1. Foam Cream

Medium to Fair Effectiveness

1. Cream or jelly alone
2. Suppositories
3. Foaming tablets
4. Sponge with liquid or powder
5. Rhythm with use of calendar and medical consultation
6. Withdrawal

Low Effectiveness

1. Douche

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Low Effectiveness

1. Douche

ARE YOU PREGNANT??

The first indication of pregnancy is obviously a missed period. Other indications develop further along in the pregnancy. Watch for:

1. a sudden weight loss or gain
2. swelling of the breasts or a color change of the nipples
3. waking up in the morning feeling nauseous
4. frequent urination

These symptoms could mean that your unhappy suspicions are true. DON'T PANIC. Go to any doctor or clinic and have a test made for pregnancy. You must have the test taken at least 10 to 18 days after conception has taken place or else the results may not be valid.

The B.U. Clinic charges \$5 for a pregnancy test, and does not have a policy of informing parents of the results. Pregnancy tests are also available at any gynecological clinic or from any private gynecologist.

ABORTIONS

Before you consider an abortion, be sure that medical tests have confirmed your pregnancy. If you are pregnant, don't panic: you'll get by with a little help from your friends.

An abortion, performed properly by a doctor, is one of the safest operations in existence. It usually takes no more than 15 minutes, has no more danger than a tonsillectomy, and is definitely safer than childbirth. An abortion usually consists of a Dilatation and Curettage or what is popularly called a D&C. First, the opening to the cervix is dilatated (or widened), then an instrument known as a curette is inserted through the cervix into the uterus and the doctor

gently proceeds to scrape the embryo off the uterine wall.

An abortion should be performed within the first 3 and a half months of pregnancy. It can be performed up to and including a few months after that, depending on the doctor. However, there is a much greater risk with a late abortion and you shouldn't count on getting it done at such a late stage. It just isn't safe then.

LEGAL ABORTIONS

Contrary to popular belief, it is possible to get a legal abortion in Mass. However, outdated laws make the process rather complicated and often somewhat lengthy. A great deal of perseverance is required.

Once pregnancy is determined, you should choose a broadminded, certified gynecologist to recommend your case to the abortion board of a private hospital. All private, non-Catholic hospitals in the Boston area will give abortions as advised by their board, usually consisting of two doctors and a psychiatrist. This board can legally recommend an abortion only if the physical or mental health of the mother is endangered by pregnancy or if the fetus has been damaged (for example by German measles). What that means is that you must convince the board that your pregnancy will worsen a previous physical defect such as a weak heart or is causing you such mental anguish that it might lead to suicide.

Legally a hospital cannot operate on anyone under 21 without parental consent. A few exceptions have been made in extreme cases.

Cost of hospital abortions varies and is often on the basis of the ability to pay.

Planned Parenthood suggests going to England where

5. Humphrey's 11" is a pill designed to bring on the menstrual period which it will do, but only if you are not pregnant.

6. Douches such as with vinegar are totally ineffective.

B. Choose the best possible abortionist. There are many people who give illegal abortions. Some are MDs and even gynecologists. Others have had no more medical training than a janitor in a hospital morgue! Names of qualified abortionists should be obtained from:

1. reputable references such as professional counselors or counseling agencies (see list at end of booklet)
2. a trusted friend with personal experience with a good abortionist

What should you look for?

Obviously an MD is preferable. Try to determine the method of abortion ahead of time. If you are very late in your pregnancy you may be given the saline injection method instead of a D&C. This is not as common as the D&C, but some doctors consider it quite as safe and effective, especially late in the pregnancy. Also try to find out what kind of equipment is used and whether or not he gives antibiotics and anesthesia. It is a good idea to check with the local A.M.A. to see if he is a qualified practicing doctor. It is also possible that he is a doctor with his license suspended for giving abortions illegally.

C. Prepare for the abortion.

1. Before you go for your operation it is wise to find a doctor who will give you post-operational care. This should be done in any case, but is vital in case you develop any complications.
2. Illegal abortions cost usually between \$300-\$800. Be ready to bring the required amount in cash at the time of the appointment.

humanistic laws make it quick, easy, and cheap to get a safe legal abortion. If this is out of the question, several states in this nation have recently "liberalized" their laws. These states include California, Colorado, North Carolina, and Maryland. The latter has the most liberal laws, however, in all of these states the chances for a non-resident to get an abortion are slim. Many girls get safe hospital abortions in Puerto Rico (see counselors at end of book for more information).

ILLEGAL ABORTIONS

Because of the involved and often demeaning process required to get a legal hospital abortion, many women turn to illegal sources. If you have decided to do this there are some general rules of caution to be followed.

A. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO ABORT YOURSELF! Many foolish old wives' tales still persist and panicked women often wrongly resort to them, hurting themselves seriously. Dangerous methods often suggested include:

1. Objects inserted in the uterus such as coathangers, crochet needles, and nails cause serious hemorrhaging and possibly death!
2. Falling down a flight of stairs may cause a concussion, but will not dislodge a fetus in the first half of the term of pregnancy. After that time any accidental abortion of the fetus caused by jarring it loose will require post-miscarriage hospital care.
3. Quinine or other medicines used to induce contraction of the uterine muscles can cause cramps, diarrhea, and internal damage, but not an abortion.
4. "Swedish Abortion Pills" often aren't what they are said to be and, if they are, will cause muscular contractions that often don't dislodge the fetus but cause hemorrhaging and internal damage.

3. If the appointment is out of town, be prepared to stay overnight as you may not feel up to a long trip home. If you can, it might be a good idea to bring along a close friend for help and moral support. However, your friend will not usually be permitted to go to the place of the abortion.
4. Get in the best possible physical and mental health before the operation. Get lots of sleep.
5. Follow closely any instructions the abortionist may give you such as special clothes to wear or not eating before the operation.
6. Don't be late or try to change the time of the abortion. This may arouse the suspicions of the abortionist and he may cancel your appointment.
7. Don't discuss details of the operation over the phone if at all possible. You should at least try to determine the type of operation used. Beware of anything other than a D&C.
8. Be prepared for melodramatic touches. It is possible that you will be blindfolded while travelling to the place of the operation and once there the doctor may be wearing a mask. The doctor's paranoia is justified because he can get into a lot of legal trouble so he doesn't want anyone to know who he is or where he works. This may very well not happen, but it might.

D. The Operation Itself-

A D&C is a simple operation about as long as a tonsillectomy, but, like all operations, has an element of danger. You may be put to sleep or just be given a localized anesthetic. The feeling is uncomfortable, but not painful. It feels like a gentle scraping of the uterine wall, which is what it is. The calmer and more relaxed you feel, the easier it will all be.

E. After the Operation-

1. You will experience some bleeding for several days after the operation. Don't use a tampon. Use a sanitary napkin.
2. Don't swim or take baths. Shower only. Anything entering the vagina can cause infection.
3. You should have a period between 4 and 8 weeks after the operation. Don't use tampon until after this.
4. Don't attempt intercourse until after this period.
5. If any post-operational difficulties occur don't hesitate to go to a doctor or hospital. High fever and pelvic pain indicate infection. Severe bleeding indicates hemorrhaging.
6. It is an excellent idea to get a post-operative check-up by an understanding gynecologist even if you seem quite healthy.

F. Protect yourself and your abortionist from an inhuman and antiquated law. If you are questioned at a hospital during any post-operative care or by the police, remember:

The only way a doctor can be convicted for performing an abortion is through the patient's testimony against him. Keep in mind that you are breaking the law, too. If you testify against the doctor you will be incriminating yourself. The police may "guarantee" you immunity to elicit your testimony, but there is nothing binding them to this promise. If they ask any information other than your name you have every right to ask for counsel and to invoke the Fifth Amendment.

VENEREAL DISEASE

A "venereal disease" is one that is communicated through sexual intercourse. The Boston Globe estimates that over 45,000 cases of VD were treated in Boston in 1968. More than half of the people treated were under age 24.

The two major venereal diseases are syphilis and gonorrhea. Syphilis is the more dangerous of the two because it spreads through the whole body if not properly cured. It can ultimately cause blindness, insanity, paralysis, or death. Gonorrhea, in addition to often causing sterility, can effect the heart or joints, bringing serious damage to health later in life. Because of the dangers of these diseases, it is crucial to recognize their symptoms as early as possible, so that treatment can be sought. If treatment is begun at an early stage, both are fairly easy to cure.

A. Symptoms-

Syphilis:

1. From 3 weeks to 3 months after contacting the disease, a sore will appear, usually in the genital area. This sore is usually very small, and doesn't hurt. It may even be completely hidden, especially in a woman. This sore will go away by itself in 3 or 4 weeks, but the disease is not gone.
2. A few weeks later, a rash will appear, either covering the body, or only a single part of the body.
3. When the rash goes away, the disease enters its "quiet" stage. Although you may look and feel fine, this is actually the most dangerous stage, the time during which it causes its worst damage. At this stage the presence of the disease can only be detected by special blood test.

Gonorrhea:

A man may realize that he is infected with gonorrhea more readily than a woman. From 3 to 9 days after he contracted it, he may feel a burning, painful sensation while urinating. He may also notice a discharge of yellow puss. A woman may have a pussy discharge or may be carrying the disease without experiencing any symptoms at all.

B. Where to go for Treatment:

If you think you have VD you should seek treatment immediately. The consequences are too dangerous not to. Even if you have already had VD and have been cured, you can get it again. It's really foolish to take home remedies, purchase pills at the drug store, or send for mail-order cures. The first step in treatment is a VD test. Handy places to go for these tests are:

1. The BU Clinic, 111 Cummington St., Boston

2. The Public Health Clinic

15 Ashburton Place, Room 204, Boston

phone: 727-2688 or 727-2639

3. any other clinic or doctor that is convenient for you.

These places will automatically refer you for treatment.

The Public Health Clinic charges fees on a sliding scale

so if you can't afford to pay you won't have to.

VD treatment centers are usually in the dermatology or urology centers of the major Boston hospitals. They are authorized by law to treat minors without the consent of parents so you need not worry about that. Also the BU Clinic does not have a policy of informing parents.

However, all doctors are legally required to report all cases of VD to the Dept. of Public Health. Boston Globe research indicates that doctors report only one in every 11 cases of gonorrhea, one in every 3 cases of syphilis.

C. Further Protection-

If you have VD, you got it from someone. The only decent thing to do is to make sure they know that they have it. (Remember: gonorrhoea is especially hard for girls to detect in themselves.) Be kind to your friends.

CLINICS

The following are only some of the clinics or groups in Boston which have facilities to help you with your problems concerning birth control and other related matters. We have listed only clinics either associated with BU or with special advantages regarding payment or time convenience.

1. The BU Clinic gives pregnancy tests at a charge of \$5. It also tests for VD. Parents are not informed except by student request. There is no obstetric specialist available.

2. Parent's Aid Society

1575 Commonwealth Ave., Boston
733-0113

This society is under the direction of Bill Baird and provides information and counseling on all of the problems discussed in this booklet to anyone who is in need of it. Cost varies according to recipient's ability to pay.

3. Planned Parenthood League

229 Berkeley St., Boston
536-8790

This group provides counseling concerning birth control and therapeutic abortion, and has a referral service to private physicians or clinics. Although Planned Parenthood will make its services available to unmarried students, its major concern is with low income families.

4. Beth Israel Hospital

330 Brookline Ave., Boston

734-4400

Provides contraceptive services on a sliding price scale from \$2.50-\$10. Call for appointment.

5. Boston City Hospital

818 Harrison Ave., Boston

424-4041

Provides contraceptive services on a sliding price scale. No appointment necessary. Clinic hours are Mon. 8-10:30, Mon.-Fri. 12:00-4:00.

6. Brighton Marine Hospital (U.S. Public Health Hospital)

77 Warren St., Brighton

782-3400 ext. 311 or 782-8697

Free contraceptive services. Call for appointment.

7. Cambridge City Hospital

1493 Cambridge St., Cambridge

354-2020

Contraceptive services provided on sliding price scale. Call for appointment.

8. Cambridge Port Medical Clinic

10 Mt. Auburn St., Cambridge

876-0284

No charge. No appointment. Open Mon.-Fri. 6-8PM.

9. Boston Evening Clinic

314 Commonwealth Ave., Boston

267-7171

Contraceptive services from \$5-\$10. No appointment necessary. Gynecology clinic open Wed. 5:30-7PM.

OTHER SOURCES OF COUNSEL AND AID

1. BU Counseling Service is very willing to talk to you, but they are not really set up to deal properly with these kinds of problems.
2. University chaplains have shown themselves to be a great deal of help to students in the past in obtaining aid. Try to pick a liberal one to talk to.
3. Bill Baird ("Birth Control Crusader") is a highly experienced source of aid. He can be reached through the Parent's Aid Society.
- *4. Student Congress (to become BU Student Union later this year, 1969)- If you need help or want to discuss a problem, please feel free to come to Congress for help. We've learned alot and met alot of people in writing this book. IF WE CANNOT HELP YOU OURSELVES, WE CAN SURELY DIRECT YOU TO SOMEONE WHO CAN. Everything will be strictly confidential. Our office is room 411 on the fourth floor of the North Tower of the Union. Our phones are 353-3641 and 353-3642.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

For more information than we can give you here see:

The Consumers Union Report on Family Planning (excellent)

Sex Without Guilt by Albert Ellis

The Complete Book of Birth Control by Alan Guttmacher

Abortion by Lawrence Lader

Contraception by Selig Neubardt

For listings of pamphlets contact:

Planned Parenthood - World Population

515 Madison Ave., N.Y., N.Y. 10022