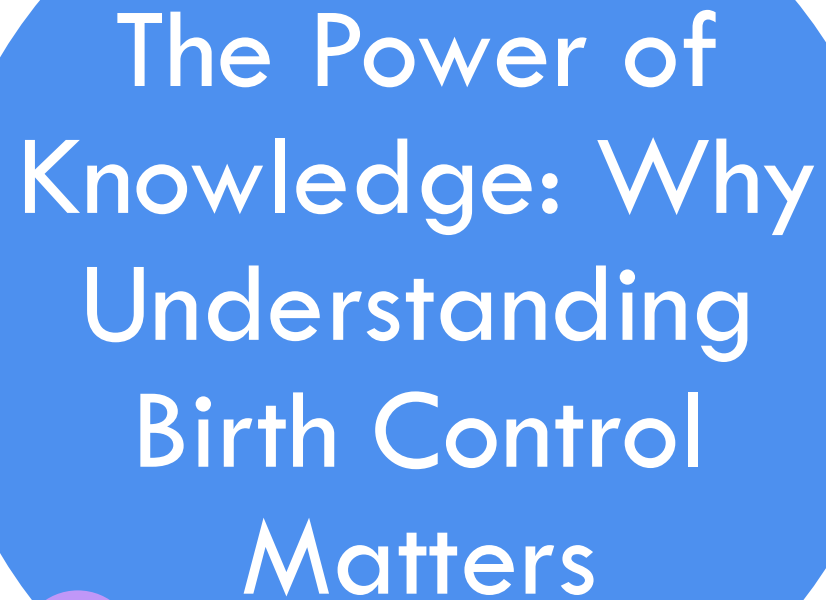




Debunking Birth Control Myths



The Power of Knowledge: Why Understanding Birth Control Matters

Birth control is a fundamental aspect of reproductive health and autonomy. Despite its widespread use, many myths and misconceptions persist

Misinformation can lead to fear, hesitation, and unintended pregnancies

Our goal today is to separate fact from fiction and empower you with accurate information.

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What is Birth Control? A Quick Overview



Key Points:

Definition: Methods used to prevent pregnancy.

Diversity of Methods: Briefly mention categories (hormonal, non-hormonal, barrier, permanent).

How it Works (Generally): Preventing ovulation, blocking sperm, changing the uterine lining.

Beyond Pregnancy Prevention: Many methods offer additional health benefits (e.g., managing periods, acne).

More Than Just "The Pill": A Spectrum of Options

Myth #1: Birth Control Makes You Gain Weight

Research Says No: Most scientific studies show no consistent link between hormonal birth control and significant, long-term weight gain.

Temporary Fluid Retention: Some individuals may experience temporary fluid retention, which is often mistaken for weight gain, but this typically resolves.

Individual Variation: Everyone's body reacts differently. Lifestyle factors (diet, exercise) play a much larger role in weight management.

Discussion with Provider: If you're concerned, discuss with your healthcare provider about options.



Myth #2: Birth Control Causes Infertility

Fertility Returns Quickly: For most methods (Pill, Patch, Ring, Implant), fertility typically returns quickly after stopping

IUDs & Fertility: IUDs do not cause infertility; fertility returns once the device is removed.

Underlying Issues: If someone struggles to conceive after stopping birth control, it's usually due to pre-existing fertility issues that were masked or not apparent before.

Age and Fertility: Age is the biggest factor affecting fertility, not prior birth control use.



Myth #3: You Need to Take a Break from Birth Control

Debunking Facts:

- **No Medical Basis:** There is no medical reason to take a break from birth control.
- **Increased Risk of Pregnancy:** Taking breaks unnecessarily increases your risk of unintended pregnancy.
- **Hormonal Fluctuation:** Stopping and starting can lead to more hormonal fluctuations and potential side effects.
- **Continuous Use is Safe:** Many methods are designed for continuous use, and some people choose to skip placebo pills for continuous suppression of periods, which is medically safe.



Myth #4: Birth Control Protects Against STIs

Debunking Facts:

- **Pregnancy Prevention ONLY:** Most birth control methods are designed *only* to prevent pregnancy.
- **Condoms are Key:** Condoms (male and female) are the *only* birth control method that also offers significant protection against most sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
- **Dual Protection:** For comprehensive protection, consider using both a birth control method for pregnancy prevention and condoms for STI prevention.
- **Regular Testing:** Emphasize the importance of regular STI testing.

Myth #5: Birth Control is Only for Sexually Active People

Debunking Facts:

- **Beyond Contraception:** Many people use hormonal birth control for non-contraceptive benefits.
- **Common Medical Uses:**
 - Regulating irregular or heavy periods
 - Reducing menstrual pain and cramps
 - Treating acne
 - Managing symptoms of PCOS (Polycystic Ovary Syndrome)
 - Treating endometriosis

Myth #6: Birth Control is 100% Effective



- **Highly Effective, Not Perfect:** While many methods are highly effective, no birth control method (except abstinence) is 100% effective at preventing pregnancy.
- **Typical Use vs. Perfect Use:** Effectiveness rates vary based on "perfect use" (always used correctly and consistently) versus "typical use" (how people actually use it, accounting for human error).
- **Method-Specific Effectiveness:**
 - **LARCs (Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives - IUDs, Implants):** Over 99% effective (most effective).
 - **Pill, Patch, Ring, Shot:** 91-94% effective with typical use.
 - **Condoms:** 85% effective with typical use.

Myth #7: Emergency Contraception is the Same as Abortion

Prevents Pregnancy, Doesn't End It: Emergency contraception (like the "morning-after pill") works by preventing ovulation or fertilization before pregnancy is established.

Not Effective if Already Pregnant: EC will not work if a person is already pregnant and cannot cause an abortion.

Different Mechanisms: Abortion pills terminate an existing pregnancy. EC prevents one from starting.

Time-Sensitive: EC is most effective when taken as soon as possible after unprotected sex.



Empowering Yourself: Key Takeaways

Knowledge is Power: Accurate information helps you make informed decisions about your body and future.

Talk to Your Provider: Your healthcare provider is your best resource for personalized advice and to address any concerns.

Find Your Fit: There are many birth control options; find the one that best suits your lifestyle and health needs.

Advocate for Yourself: Don't hesitate to ask questions and seek clarity.



Thank you

Resources:

- Bedsider: bedsider.org
- CDC: cdc.gov/reproductivehealth
- Getpersonal. Org

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