

# PREVENTING PREGNANCY: TALKING ABOUT AND USING CONTRACEPTION

## Lesson 11

DIFFERING  
ABILITIES

### LEARNER OUTCOME

Identify and describe basic types of contraceptives; i.e., abstinence, condom, foam, birth control pill<sup>1</sup>.



### MATERIALS

Birth Control Kit



### INTRODUCTION

Comprehensive Sexual Health Education suggests abstinence as the preferred sexual behaviour amongst teens. Abstaining from sexual activity that involves exchange of bodily fluids and/or genital to genital or skin to genital contact is the only sure way of avoiding the risk of pregnancy or sexually transmitted infections. For teens who do not practice abstinence postponement of initial sexual activity, adherence to one sexual partner and protected sexual intercourse are sequentially offered as the next best alternatives<sup>ii</sup>. The programs that are most effective in helping young people to abstain discuss abstinence, contraception and sexual health decision making<sup>iii</sup>. This lesson focuses on exploring the different contraceptive methods.



## APPROACHES/STRATEGIES

### A. GROUND RULES

- Ensure that ground rules are established before starting your classes. For classes that have already established ground rules, quickly reviewing them can promote a successful lesson.
- You should be prepared for giggles in your class. Acknowledge students' reactions to the subject by saying that it is common to feel uncomfortable talking about sexual relationships. Having these discussions helps teens feel prepared if they do have a sexual relationship.



Sexual health education occurs most effectively in a classroom where there is a mutual feeling of trust, safety and comfort. Having Ground Rules in place can be a very successful way to facilitate a positive classroom environment. Click [here](#) for more information on how to set up ground rules.

### B. DISCUSSION- WHAT IS CONTRACEPTION?

Introduce this lesson by referring back to lesson 10 and doing a quick review. Discussion in lesson 10 focused on making decisions to have safe sexual relationships. One of those decisions can involve using contraception to prevent a pregnancy.

1. What does contraception mean?
  - Contraception is sometimes called birth control. It is any method that is used to stop a female getting pregnant. It stops the egg and the sperm coming together to fertilize or stops the fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus.



Many teens may not be familiar with the term contraception. They may have heard the term birth control, which is often used to refer to the birth control pill. A young woman may say "I am on birth control" meaning she is taking the birth control pill. It is important to help teens develop language that they are comfortable with but also to let them know that health care providers may use different language.



This lesson follows on from Lesson 10: Decision-Making: Creating Safe Sexual Relationships. It is best suited to students who are able to discuss what it would be like to have a sexual relationship. Not all students will be ready for this level of information which is very practical and focuses on building knowledge and skills that teens can use if they are involved in a sexual relationship. There is no assumption that all teens are sexually active, rather an understanding that some are, and many will be in the future.

2. How does a pregnancy start?
  - A sperm from a male fertilizes the egg from a female and the egg then implants itself in the uterus to start growing into a baby. Sperm are carried in the semen that is released from the male's penis. Sometimes the semen is released directly into the vagina but sperm can also travel to the egg when semen is released near the opening of the vagina.
3. Why is it important to learn about contraception?
  - Some people will never need to use contraception but learning about it now gives you information for the future.
  - People like to have sexual relationships that do not lead to pregnancy so using contraception is the only way to prevent pregnancy.
  - Learning how to talk to a boyfriend or girlfriend about contraception is an important skill in having a healthy sexual relationship.
  - It is important to know where to go to get contraception – a clinic, doctor's office, pharmacist or drug store
  - If you choose not be abstinent you need to choose another method to prevent pregnancy.
4. If contraception is not used or it does not work, what can happen? What will a pregnancy mean for a teenager?
  - When a teen finds out that she is pregnant she will need to decide if she will continue with the pregnancy to parent the child, choose adoption or terminate the pregnancy. This may be a difficult decision to make and will likely take lots of support from family, friends and perhaps counselling services.
  - A baby is a very real and serious consequence of having sexual intercourse.
  - Both parents are equally responsible for raising their child and legally responsible for supporting this child until s/he becomes an adult.
  - Teen parents face many challenges including lack of support from family and friends, having to give the baby up and depression.
  - Many factors can reduce the chances of becoming a teenage parent including having goals you don't want to give up, talking with parents, resisting peer pressure, abstaining from sex, or using birth control consistently and correctly.



The concept of pregnancy and parenting can be difficult for teens to grasp. You may want to extend this discussion to explore your students' perspective on teen pregnancy. If students know someone who is pregnant or parenting this can act either as a deterrent or give an idealized view of parenthood. Their parents may have been teens when they had a family. It can be challenging to create a balance between prevention and positive messages related to parenthood and pregnancy outcomes. Prevention programs must consider different views and perceptions to be effective.

## C. CONTRACEPTION METHODS

1. What are some of the types of contraception that you have heard of?
  - List them on the board. Add abstinence if it is not included by the group.
2. What is the only 100% safe method of contraception?
  - Abstinence is often referred to as being 100% safe; meaning that it completely removes the risk of sexually transmitted infection (STI) and unplanned pregnancy. Abstinence only prevents pregnancy if no sperm is released either into or near the vagina. For further discussion about abstinence please refer back to lesson 10.
3. Methods of contraception can be divided in to groups:

Hormonal methods	Used by females to stop an egg being released; Prescription needed; Very effective in stopping pregnancy; Some side-effects; NO protection from STI; Can be used with barrier methods e.g., condom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Birth control pill – taken every day</li> <li>• Patch – changed weekly</li> <li>• Vaginal ring – inserted once a month</li> <li>• Depo provera – injection every 12 weeks</li> <li>• Emergency contraception pill – taken after unprotected sex</li> <li>• Mirena/Jaydess IUD</li> </ul>
Barrier methods	Something stops the egg and sperm from meeting; Gives protection from STI; Can be used with hormonal methods or spermicides; Male condoms made of latex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Male condom – worn on the penis</li> <li>• Female condom – worn inside the vagina</li> </ul>
Other	Can prevent sperm and egg meeting; Spermicides contain chemicals to kill sperm;	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copper IUD (needs prescription)</li> <li>• Diaphragm</li> <li>• Sponge</li> <li>• Spermicides</li> </ul>

## D. BIRTH CONTROL KIT DEMONSTRATION

The birth control kit is an optional tool that can be used to demonstrate to students the different methods. Many students will benefit from this hands-on approach as it helps students to physically see, touch and hold items.

It is important for the teacher to be familiar with the kit's contents and the discussion points for each item before doing the following activity.

### BIRTH CONTROL KIT CONTENTS:

- Birth Control Patch – Evra (sample and/or photo)
- Birth Control Pills Sample (2)
- Depo Provera (photo)
- Diaphragm (photo)
- Female Condoms (1)
- IUD- Copper (sample and/ or photo)
- IUD- Mirena/Jaydess (sample and/or photo)
- Male Condoms (5 latex, 1 non-latex)
- NuvaRing® (photo)
- Plan B/NorLevo Emergency Contraception Box (sample and/or photo)
- Spermicide (photo)

### Procedure:

1. Introduce the “Birth Control Kit”. Tell the students that you are going to use it to teach them about the common contraceptive methods available to them.
2. Display the items from the kit. You may also cluster products (i.e., hormonal methods such as patch and vaginal ring could go together).
3. Present each item to the class one at a time. Have students brainstorm answers to these questions:
  - What is the item?
  - How would the item be used?
  - How does this item prevent pregnancy?
  - How effective is this method?
  - Advantages/Disadvantages?
4. Present each item to the class, adding comments from the Birth Control Information Sheets to enhance the discussion. If appropriate pass around each item for students to examine. If passing around condoms be sure to check if students have latex allergies.
5. Condoms are a common method used by teens. They are easy to access and do not need lots of planning ahead of use. The following video demonstrations are designed to assist teachers who would like to show condom demonstrations to their students. The accompanying notes give step by step instructions to help guide teachers to perform the demonstrations.



Teachers may be able to borrow birth control kits from local community health centres or through their school nurse. For teachers who are unable to access these kits, a pictorial birth control kit is available [here](#).

6. Debrief this activity. Questions can include:
- What do you think is the best method of contraception? Why?
    - Emphasize that abstinence is the only 100% effective method if used properly.
  - What do you think is the best method of protecting oneself from STI? Why?
    - If someone is sexually active, dual protection (the use of hormonal contraception and a condom) is the best protection.
  - In a sexual relationship, who is responsible to ensure contraception is used? Who should pay?
    - Using contraception is a shared responsibility and each person in the relationship should contribute. Free contraception is available for anyone who can not afford it from Sexual and Reproductive Health Clinics.

## EXTENSION ACTIVITY – TALKING ABOUT CONTRACEPTION CASE STUDIES

Talking about contraception and sexual decision making with a boyfriend or girlfriend is an important skill that takes practice. In small groups or as a class use each case study to discuss communication strategies.

---



### QUESTION BOX

Have students fill out questions and address them next class.



The process of asking questions is an important learning activity that helps students clarify and validate information being presented. Question Box is a method of individualized instruction which has been proven to enhance learning. Click [here](#) for more information on how to use the question box.



### SELF REFLECTION

During the lesson, were:

- Ground rules being followed?
- Good practices established regarding group work and discussion?

What will you change for future classes with this group?

What will you change for future use of this lesson?



## STUDENT ASSESSMENT

During the lesson, did students:

### Knowledge:

- Define contraception and abstinence?
- Outline the importance of abstinence?

### Skills:

- Describe basic methods of contraception?
- Describe how to access common methods of contraception?

### Attitudes:

- Decide what method(s) is/are best used to protect against pregnancy and STI?

---

<sup>i</sup>Alberta Education. (2002). Health and life skills guide to implementation: Kindergarten to grade 9. Retrieved from <http://education.alberta.ca/media/352993/pos.pdf>

<sup>ii</sup>SIECUS. (2007). Community Action Kit, Responding to *Arguments Against Sexuality Education*. Retrieved from [http://www.communityactionkit.org/pdfs/Learning\\_The\\_Basics/what\\_the\\_research\\_tells.html](http://www.communityactionkit.org/pdfs/Learning_The_Basics/what_the_research_tells.html)

<sup>iii</sup>SIECCAN. (2004). Canadian Journal of Human Sexuality, Vol. 13 (2). Retrieved from <http://www.sieccan.org/pdf/mckay.pdf>

## Talking About Contraception Case Studies

Talking about contraception and sexual decision making with a boyfriend or girlfriend is an important skill that takes practice. In small groups or as a class use each case study to discuss communication strategies.

Kelly and Mark have been going out for several months. They are talking about the day they plan to have sex for the first time. Kelly explains that they will have to use a condom. Mark insists that there is no danger of any sexually transmitted infections (STI) and refuses to wear one. Mark is complaining that Kelly doesn't trust him; Kelly just wants to be safe.

What is Kelly concerned about?

What should Kelly do?

Silvia's friend Anna has been seeing her boyfriend for a while. Anna told Silvia that recently they've started having sex. Silvia asked her friend what she is doing to prevent pregnancy as she knows Anna would not be able to deal with a pregnancy right now. Anna is too embarrassed to go to the doctor.

What advice can Silvia give her friend?

Jamie and Jake are making plans to have sex for the first time and are planning to do it the night of a party at their friends. Jamie felt uncomfortable talking to Jake about using a condom, so she never brought it up. Jake did not discuss it either and has not asked her if she is using any type of birth control. The night of the party both Jake and Jamie are nervous about having sex for the first time and decide to have a few drinks first.

What might affect Jamie's ability to make healthy decisions at the party?

What should Jake and Jamie have done differently?

Kai and Riley have been together for a long time and are considering having sex for the first time.

What do both Kai and Riley need to do to prepare and make sure they are protected?