Contraception

Some health professionals differentiate between the terms contraception and birth control, the former referring to prevention of conception and the latter referring to prevention of birth. Please note information presented in this course is limited to contraception, so any reference to "birth control" is actually a reference to contraception. For more information on abortion, the reader may want to visit the National Abortion Federation (O).

Since contraception and sexually transmitted disease (STD) prevention are two related, but separate, issues, those learning about contraceptive methods should also think about how such methods may or may not prevent against STDs. While prevention of pregnancy is an issue in only some sexual relationships, STD's can be an issue in all sexual relationships. More information on STD's will be presented in the tenth week.

Contraceptive devices may be categorized by how they work. For example, there are barriers, which serve to prevent male sperm from entering the female uterus. There are also hormonal methods, which generally alter the female reproductive environment enough to prevent pregnancy. Intrauterine Devices (IUD's) are a bit unique, so they are presented in this class as within their own category. Natural Family Planning methods require no specialized devices, products, medication or surgery in order to prevent pregnancy. Sterilization methods are designed to prevent pregnancy on a permanent basis.

This class topic will incorporate contraceptive methods mainly available in the United States. Students interested in global reproductive health efforts may be interested in perusing the Family Health International website (O). The United Nations Population Network provides interesting information on levels and trends of contraceptive use as assessed in 2002 across the world (O). The World Health Organization also provides information on global sexual and reproductive health, including maternal mortality statistics (O).

If you are completing an on-line orientation activity, you may click here when finished. If you are not completing the on-line orientation, please disregard this notice.

Reproductive Anatomy

None of the below websites are required. If, however, you are interested in learning a little more about internal reproductive anatomy, these sites can be helpful.

- Medline provides an illustrations of male reproductive anatomy and female reproductive anatomy
- The Doe Report website contains illustrations of female reproductive anatomy
- CNN, in its online article about Mirena, also features an interactive feature allowing the visitor to view how the female reproductive system works
- D. Ashley Hill's Women's Health Site provides photos of the ovaries, uterus (NOTE: sensitive photos)
• The Geneva Foundation for Medical Education and Research features online images of various male & female reproductive organs
• Afraidtoask.com supplies images and illustrations of female external and internal reproductive anatomy (O--the website warns of explicit material; entering the website shows agreement you are an adult or have parental permission; ALSO--unwanted advertising frames may pop up as a result of accessing the website)
• Afraidtoask.com supplies images and illustrations of male external and internal reproductive anatomy (O--the website warns of explicit material; entering the website shows agreement you are an adult or have parental permission; ALSO--unwanted advertising frames may pop up as a result of accessing the website)
• Travel to the University of Kansas Medical Center if interested in slides of male reproductive anatomy (O)
• Travel to the University of Kansas Medical Center if interested in slides of female reproductive anatomy at the cellular level (O)
• The University of Arizona's Biology Project offers a tutorial including a quiz, reading and illustrative material pertaining to the female reproductive cycle (O)