

Contraceptive Failure & Teens

Teen Contraceptive Facts

- As of 1995, 30% of teens (15 to 19) use contraception.

Among contracepting teens, the methods used include:

- Oral Contraceptives (The pill): 44%
- The Condom: 37%
- Injectables (Shots): 10%
- Withdrawal: 4%
- Implants: 3%
- Diaphragm: 1%
- Female Sterilization: 0.3%

Source: CDC "Contraceptive use among women 15 to 44 years of age, according to age, race, Hispanic origin, and method of contraception: United States, 1982, 1988, and 1995," Health, United States, 2002

Contraceptive Limitations

Contraceptives are far less effective for teens and young adults than for older users.

- Among sexually active teenage girls aged 12 to 18, 20% of oral contraceptive users became pregnant over a mere six months.
- For persons under the age of 18, condoms were found to fail 18.4% of the time after one year of use.

Sources: LM Dinerman et al, Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Med, 149(9):967-72, Sept 1995. MD Hayward and J Yogi, "Contraceptive Failure Rate in the US: Estimates from the 1982 National Survey of Family Growth," Family Perspectives, Vol 18, No. 5, Sept/Oct 1986, p. 204.

- Among teenage girls aged 15 to 17 using oral contraceptives, 13% missed a pill over 3 months time.
- Among this same group, 17% missed two or more pills over 3 months time.

Sources: CDC, 1995 Survey of Family Growth, Table 45. "Oral Contraceptive use and consistency of oral contraceptive use."

- Teenagers are less likely than older women to practice contraception consistently and more likely to practice contraception sporadically or not at all.

Source: "Teen Sex and Pregnancy," Facts in Brief, AGI, 1999

- Half of all contracepting teens girls living with a boyfriend experience a contraceptive failure within a year.
- 15% of all contracepting teens girls who do not live with a boyfriend experience a contraceptive failure within a year.
- In preventing pregnancy, condoms have a standardized failure rate of 14.7 percent over the course of a year.
- For teens living together, condoms users experienced an unplanned pregnancy over 50% percent of the time over the course of a year.
- For teens not living together, condoms users experienced an unplanned pregnancy over 14-23% percent of the time over the course of a year.

Source: H Fu, JE Darroch, T Haas, N Ranjit, Contraceptive Failure Rates: New Estimates From the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, Family Planning Perspectives, 1999, 31(2):56-63

- For oral contraceptives, the risk of contraceptive failure is 55% higher among women younger than twenty.
- The typical woman who uses reversible methods of contraception continuously from her 15th to her 45th birthday will experience 1.8 contraceptive failures, assuming she uses contraception perfectly each time. Most women will experience more failures due to imperfect use.
- "Most reversible methods [of contraception] are difficult to use correctly."

Source: J Trussell, B Vaughan, Contraceptive Failure, Method-Related Discontinuation And Resumption of Use: Results from the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, Family Planning Perspectives, 1999, 31(2).

Percentage Annual Contraceptive Failures for Teens

Contraceptive Method	Lower Socioeconomic Status		Higher Socioeconomic Status	
	Unmarried/Not Cohabiting	Cohabiting, not married	Unmarried/Not Cohabiting	Cohabiting, not married
Pill	12.9	48.4	7.6	31.4
Condom	23.2	71.7	14.0	51.3
Spermicides	45.7	NS	29.4	NS
Withdrawal	41.6	NS	26.4	NS
Natural Family Planning	41.5	NS	26.3	NS
Injectable	4.2	18.6	2.4	NS
Implant	2.4	10.8	1.4	NS

* NS –not significant (not enough people to come up with valid statistics)

- Overall annual failure rates are highest for women younger than 20 (16%), and decrease steadily with age, to 9% for women aged 30 and older.

Source: H Fu, JE Darroch, T Haas, N Ranjit, *Contraceptive Failure Rates: New Estimates From the 1995 National Survey of Family Growth, Family Planning Perspectives*, 1999, 31(2):56-63

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