

SEXtalk)))

Answers to Your Questions about Sex and Relationships

Have a ??? Email sextalk@u.arizona.edu

factoid

72% of UA students had either one or no sexual partners during the last school year. One in 4 UA students report never having had sexual intercourse (Wellness 2001, n=1220).

Q. Other than condoms and surgery, what forms of male contraceptives are available?

A. At this time, no other methods are available. Finding a way to decrease and control sperm production is a true scientific challenge. It involves changing levels of the important male hormone, testosterone, which influences male sex characteristics as well as sexual interest and function. The side effects of decreased testosterone production are not very desirable: shrinking of testicles, etc.

Nevertheless, research is underway. One study involving 400 men in nine countries severely inhibited sperm production in almost all (98%) of the men. The major drawbacks of the prototype drug include taking the drug for a long time before it becomes effective and a weekly injection schedule.

Q. I'm a newlywed. My wife is now considering taking the pill. Ever since we started having sex we've used condoms. I'm a little concerned about how effective the pill is versus condoms. Should we use both contraceptive methods, or are we just fine with her taking the pill?

A. Taken correctly and consistently, the pill (98-99.5%) is more effective for pregnancy prevention than condoms (88-98%). The pill does not protect against sexually transmitted diseases. As long as you are both uninfected (no herpes, chlamydia, etc.) and faithful (not having any other sexual partners) your need for disease protection is not an issue. The benefits of condoms are that they can be much less expensive than oral contraceptives, and have none of the side effects of the pill (such as weight gain). The benefits of the pill are that it doesn't interrupt lovemaking, and it can help reduce menstrual cramps and flow for a woman as well as regulating her periods and lowering her risks of endometrial and ovarian cancer. Your wife may have a preference. Either method is available at the Campus Health Service.

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