

sextalk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

factoid For most healthy women, using birth control such as “the pill” is safer than pregnancy or childbirth. (www.plannedparenthood.org)

Q. Does the birth control patch put you at risk for blood clots and hypertension? I've heard both yes and no.

A. The birth control patch, also known by its brand name Ortho Evra, is a very safe and effective form of birth control for most women. But like all medications, there are health side effects that can occur in rare cases. As you mention, women who use the patch may have a slightly greater chance of developing blood clots in the legs, lungs, heart or brain. To date, Ortho Evra has not been linked to hypertension; though women with a history of high blood pressure are typically advised against using the patch.

Other health conditions and behaviors can also increase the side effects of Ortho Evra in particular, and hormonal birth control methods in general. Women who smoke cigarettes are perhaps the group most at risk for some of these health issues. Other factors such as age, weight, diabetes and a history of blood clots can also pose additional risks.

As with all types of prescription birth control, you'll want to discuss your current health and history with a provider before beginning a birth control regimen to determine which method is the safest and most effective for you.

Campus Health Service offers a range of birth control options, from male and female condoms, to oral contraceptives (“the pill”), “the ring” (NuvaRing) and “the patch.” To schedule an appointment, call 621-9202. For more information on birth control, go to www.health.arizona.edu.

Q. Why is gonorrhea called “the clap”?

A. Gonorrhea has been informally called “the clap” for a very long time; but like many words, the moniker has changed just enough over the years to obscure its origins. In fact, this piece of American slang is originally derived from the Old French word “clapoir”, which refers to a sexual sore, and dates as far back as 1587.

Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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