Students advised on birth control methods

EDITOR'S NOTE: This article was submitted by Jane Smissaert, R.N., Health Educator at the Student Health Centre.

Information on the methods of birth control is readily available today. People are being taught how to prevent pregnancies and yet unwanted pregnancies are still happening, especially amongst unmarried couples.

Obviously birth control information is not the complete answer to successful birth control. One must appreciate the fact that beyond the decision of whether or not to have sexual relations, there is a separate and difficult decision whether or not to use birth control. Sexual relations can be carried on discreetly, but it is an obvious thing to ask for an appointment with a physician for counselling on birth control. Consequently, I presume some are avoiding this experience, and reverting to drugstore methods. These are fine if they are used in combination and correctly.

By combination, I mean the condom should be used along with the vaginal foam for example. By correctly, I mean there is a right way and a wrong way to use each method, if you are going to prevent pregnancy. This is why we see the need for birth control counselling even if a drug store method is being considered.

One can assure the individual of confidentiality but somehow that doesn't seem to be enough for some people, possibly because the real question we are dealing with here is not "What will other people think of me?" but rather "What do I think of myself?" If this is happening, then it is good, because young adulthood is the time for learning who you are and why you are you. It is a time for exploring aspects of yourself that you hadn't thought much about before.

Possibly a reason for poor use of birth control is the fact that some sexual relationships are not planned situations, but rather "just happen" -- and if these situations are "just happening occasionally" -- the individual feels even less inclined to use birth control methods, thinking that if sexual relations are infrequent and irregulat a pregnancy is not a likely to happen. This is not true. If sexual intercourse occurs during the fertile period of a woman's cycle, the possibility of a pregnancy is great. The biggest problem with young women is that their fertile period is very difficult to determine and cannot be safely predicted in most cases.

Another handicap to the sensible use of birth control might be lack of communication between the male and female. I'm wondering if talking about birth control methods would have a positive or a detremental effect on a relationship. I'm sure it could go either way depending on the individuals and the relationship.

Switching the emphasis from the actual teaching of birth control methods to the discussion of what is meant by "responsible sex" is perhaps an answer to successful birth control.

This concept presents two choices to the individual. First being the person who abstains from sexual intercourse until he or she wants to have children. Secondly being the person who is sexually active, but, knows the risks, knows the methods, decides to use birth control, and uses it faithfully. These two kinds of people are protecting themselves and their partners because of self-respect and respect for one another and this is basically what having responsible sex is all about.

There are people on campus and in the Fredericton area who are will and able to answer your questions and help you decide about birth control.

Information on methods of birth control is available on the health information stands in the Student Union Building and at the Student Health Centre. Any of this information can be interpreted for you by the doctors and nurses at Student Health.

Films slated

The UNB Film Society announces the beginning of their winter program.

The films scheduled for this term include **The Salamander** shown on January 10-11; France's classic, **La Grande Illusion**, shown on January 24-25; **Garden of Delights** onJanuary 31-February 1; **Cannes Festival winner, Ali-Fear Eats the Soul** on February 14-15 and **The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie** on March 28.

In addition on March 13 and 14 will be Michel Brault's internationally acclaimed film on the experiences of jailed FLQ suspects in 1970.

The Film Society offers a membership at half price for their winter program. This membership consists of $3.50 for six films. These special memberships can be purchased at any showing, or from the Department of History, Room 120 Tilley Hall.

answers

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