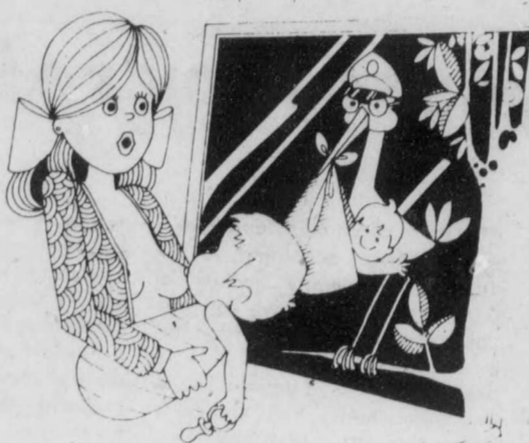


BIRTH



By SHEENAGH MURPHY

Whether or not a student likes to admit it, birth control should be an integral part of every student's education. The trend of society has been to educate the mind and forget the body, a trend which is realistically if slowly beginning to change.

Several pregnancies a year are reported at the UNB Student Health Centre, a number which can be doubled to include those girls who go elsewhere for help.

As university students it is safe to assume that having accepted the responsibility of attending university, and the responsibilities which go with it, then it is time also for students to take the responsibility for their own bodies.

It is up to each individual to decide whether or not he or she wishes to indulge in sexual activity, it is also that individual's responsibility to insure that some form of birth control is used.

It is important to take into consideration, that not only are the two partners involved but should a pregnancy be the result of the union, parents, friends and the fetus are also brought into the picture.

Preventive medicine appears to be the best answer, heartbreak and physical woes can be avoided if a person takes the time to take advantage of the many and varied methods of birth control available today. The cost is usually minimal and a small amount of time invested can more than make up for what could be a very awkward situation.

Traditionally it is the women who should worry about contraception, for it is they who get pregnant. However, men should also accept their share of the responsibility, a consideration which has been lacking in many cases, but is hopefully beginning to be accepted.

Any physician can give a person valuable and adequate advice on what form of birth control is best for them. For more detailed and individual advice it would be best to consult one, our own doctors here at the centre would be glad to oblige.

However, for those who wish to be at least partially familiarized with birth control methods, read on. . . The myths and misconceptions about birth control run rampant through most areas, and it is important students realize that sometimes what they consider "sure fire" methods are anything but.

RHYTHM

Most people are aware that there are only certain times in the month when it is possible for conception to take place, the days just before and after the egg is released. However this method is anything but reliable, as most women are unaware of the exact period of their ovulation. To achieve the exact time, certain factors must be taken into consideration, these factors include first of all that the women have a regular period. If she does, she needs the help of a doctor, a calendar, records of her body temperatures taken every morning and other things.

At best, it is only partially reliable, even with all the information, fluctuations in the body can circumvent all the charts a person wishes to make.

WITHDRAWAL

This method is anything but reliable, contrary to the belief of many. It involves the man withdrawing the penis from inside the woman before his climax so

that the sperm are not left near or inside her body. Unfortunately, poor control in some cases and the fact that some sperm are released prior to climax make for a very high failure rate.

This method is also considered extremely frustrating for both partners.

DOUCHING

Using this method is like closing the barn door after the horse is gone. While a woman may feel a great deal cleaner after this she will in no way be protecting herself from conceiving. It is achieved by washing the vagina with water or a special solution immediately after intercourse.

Within only a few seconds after intercourse the man's sperm has already entered the womb, a place where the douche solution cannot reach to flush them out. In addition the solution can sometimes aid the sperm in actually reaching its destination.

Feminine hygiene products are not for birth control and should not be confused with contraceptives.

Now for the more reliable methods. Before a person attempts any of the following methods, they should realize that with the exception of sterilization, there is no 100 percent effective method. This is not necessarily because the method itself is not effective, but rather because people tend to be forgetful and careless.

THE PILL

The pill today is one of the most popular and contrary to belief safest methods of birth control.

To be effective, the pill must be taken as directed. One per day for 20 or 21 days continually depending on the type of pill.

The synthetic hormones, estrogen and progesterone present in the pill inhibit ovulation by suppressing the secretion of luteinizing hormone and follicle stimulating hormone by the pituitary gland. Taking the pill irregularly fails to suppress those hormones. The woman's natural cyclic hormones are already in the blood and are relatively unchanged by the small dose of estrogen or progesterone present in the pill.

In essence, the pill prevents the woman from ovulating, thus there is no egg for the sperm to fertilize.

For the first month or two on the pill, some women may have tender breasts or feel nauseated. These symptoms are normal and their effect is temporary.

In addition, there are a small number of women whom the pill just doesn't suit. Her doctor should be able to recommend another form of birth control in that case.

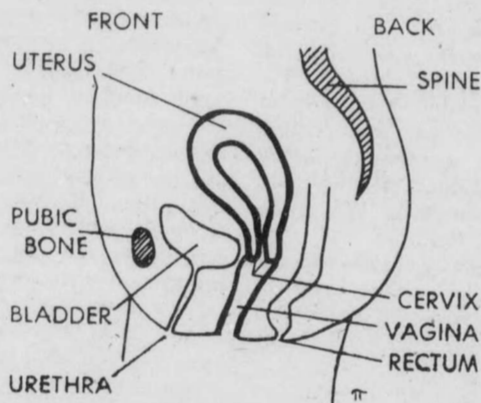
It has been bandied around that the pill may be one cause of cancer although no conclusive evidence can be found to support this. In fact according to some studies - it actually aids in preventing cancer by suppressing it.

Another misconception about the pill is that it can cause blood-clotting. This is not always true, although there is more risk of developing blood clots in women who take the pill than those who don't.

By taking a low estrogen pill, and insuring she doesn't take the pill if - she has severe varicose veins, if she has ever had phlebitis or pulmonary embolism, if she experiences leg or calf pain associated with swelling and redness, or if she experiences severe chest pains, a woman can usually avoid side effects.

The woman on the pill may also gain a small amount of weight due to the retention of excess water and salt in the body. This is usually temporary, and can

FEMALE PELVIC ORGANS
(cross section)



MALE PELVIC ORGANS

