# **3.1**

# **Birth Control**

**What is it?**

Birth control, also known as contraception, anticonception, and fertility control, is a method or device used to prevent pregnancy. Birth control has been used since ancient times, but effective and safe methods of birth control only became available in the 20th century.

**More reasons for use**

Many women choose to use contraception because of certain health advantages. For example, some hormonal birth control methods may help regulate your period, reduce acne, and/or lower endometriosis-related pain.

**Male contraceptives**

1. Condoms:

* What are they?

The only type of contraception that can both prevent pregnancy and protect against Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). Condoms are made from very thin latex (rubber), and are designed to stop your semen from coming into contact with your sexual partner.

* Side Effects:

Condoms are very strong but may split or tear if not used properly.

1. Vasectomy:

* What is it?

A vasectomy (male sterilization) is a surgical procedure to cut or seal the tubes that carry a man's sperm to permanently prevent pregnancy.

* Side Effects:

Possible complications include a collection of blood inside the scrotum (hematoma), hard lumps called sperm granulomas (caused by sperm leaking from the tubes), an infection, or long-term testicle pain (you may need further surgery)

**Female Contraception**

1. The oral contraceptive pill:

* What is it?

It's a pill that contains artificial versions of female hormones oestrogen and progesterone, which are produced naturally in the ovaries. It prevents pregnancy by keeping the egg and sperm apart or by stopping ovulation.

* Side Effects:

Headaches, nausea, breast tenderness mood swings and high blood pressure.

1. A contraceptive diaphragm or cap:

* What is it?

A circular dome made of thin, soft silicone that's inserted into the vagina before sex. It covers the cervix so sperm cannot get into the uterus to fertilise an egg.

* Side Effects:

Cystitis (bladder infection) can be a problem for some women

1. IUD:

* What is it?

An IUD is a small T-shaped plastic and copper device that's put into your uterus by a doctor. It releases copper to prevent pregnancy for between 5 and 10 years.

* Side Effects:

Your periods may become heavier, longer or more painful, though this may improve after a few months.

# **3.2**

# **Abortion**

**What is it?**

Abortion is the removal of pregnancy tissue, products of conception or the fetus and placenta (afterbirth) from the uterus. In general, the terms fetus and placenta are used after eight weeks of pregnancy. Pregnancy tissue and products of conception refer to tissue produced by the union of an egg and sperm before eight weeks. Other terms for an abortion include elective abortion, induced abortion, termination of pregnancy and therapeutic abortion.

**Other reasons for abortion**

An abortion is used most often to end an unplanned pregnancy. Unplanned pregnancies happen when birth control is not used, is used incorrectly or fails to prevent a pregnancy.

**How are abortions conducted?**

Doctors can use medications, surgery or a combination of both to end a pregnancy. The method depends on how far along in the pregnancy you are, your medical history and your preference.

Abortions during early pregnancy, before 9 weeks, can be done safely with medications. Abortions between 9 and 14 weeks usually are done surgically, although medications may be used to help soften and open the cervix.

After 14 weeks, abortions can be done using labor inducing medications that cause uterine contractions or by using these medicines in combination with surgery.

**Abortion Methods**

1. Medical abortion

Abortions completed with medication, called medical abortions, can be performed within 70 days of gestation. Days of gestation are the number of days beginning on the first day of your last menstrual period.

1. Surgical abortion

Surgical abortion involves dilating the opening to the uterus (cervix) and placing a small suction tube into the uterus. Suction is used to remove the fetus and related pregnancy material from the uterus.

# **3.3**

# **Diseases in the reproductive organs (Females)**

1. **Endometriosis**

* What is it?

It is a disorder of the uterus where the uterine lining (endometrium), grows abnormally outside of the uterus. This inflicts pain in the individual, especially whilst menstruating.

Despite being displaced, it behaves as it normally would (growing, breaking down and bleeding with each menstrual cycle), irritating surrounding tissue.

* Symptoms
* Severe cramps
* Constant fatigue
* Urination and bowel pain
* Infertility
* Ovarian cysts amongst others.
* Treatments
* Pain medication through prescription such as ibuprofen
* Oral contraceptives to shorten duration of periods
* Laparoscopic surgery to remove abnormal tissue.

1. **Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)**

* What is it?

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome is the most common endocrine disorder in women. While the exact cause of PCOS is unknown, experts believe elevated levels of androgens and insulin may be related to the condition. PCOS affects women of all ages; from adolescence to pre-menopausal. It is the leading cause of infertility in women.

* Symptoms
* Excess hair growth
* Irregular periods
* Weight gain
* Baldness
* Mood swings
* Acne
* Treatments
* Diabetes: Due to insulin resistance more than 50 % of women with pcos will develop diabetes of pre-diabetes before they turn 40 years of age.
* Heart Attack: Women with PCOS have a 4-7 times greater risk of heart attack than women of the same age without PCOS.
* Depression: Depression, mood swings and anxiety are common in women with PCOS. Some studies suggest this could be linked to insulin resistance of hormonal imbalance.
* Cancer: Women with PCOS are at endometrial cancer, as the lack of the progesterone hormone can thicken the endometrium, which damages the lining of the womb and cause heavy or irregular bleeding, overtime this can lead to cancer.

# **3.5**

# **Health benefits of sex**

1. **Improves immunity**

Even though there are several detrimental effects of sex on the immune system, people who have sex regularly tend to have a higher level of a immunoglobin A, a cold fighting antibody, allowing them to have resistance to several virus and germs.

1. **Lowers blood pressure**

Research has proven that there is a link present between low blood pressure and sex. “European researchers asked 51 healthy men and women ages 20 to 47 about their sexual frequency and then measured their blood pressure. As frequency increased, blood pressure decreased.”

1. **Reduces risks of heart attack**

Sex helps keep oestrogen and testosterone levels in balance. The risk of these levels being low can lead to heart attack.

1. **Reduces risk of prostate cancer**

Studies have proved that men with a higher frequency of ejaculations may have a slightly lower risk of prostate cancer. Scientists are currently working on establishing the bottom line link in these two factors.

1. **Form of exercise**

Sex is seen as a form of moderate exercise as the body burns five calories per minute.