



Bathroom Betty and Johnny Answers

1. Can birth control cause cancer? Do you really gain weight when you go on the pill? What about the birth control patch?

Oral contraceptives slightly increase the risk of breast cancer and slightly decrease the risk of uterine and ovarian cancer. There is also a risk of developing blood clots, (made more likely if you smoke). This is why you can only get the pill through a prescription or by seeing a doctor at a community health clinic (such as Teen Clinic – 870 Portage Avenue – Mondays 4:30 – 8:00) and why you should tell your doctor or nurse as much about your medical history as possible. Some other possible side effects of the pill are nausea, headaches, mood swings, reduced or increased acne, and small weight gain or weight loss (you should read the information that comes with the pill package or talk to your doctor to learn about other side effects). There are several different types of oral contraceptives and the side effects are different for each person. The birth control patch is a new form of birth control that goes on your skin (usually your arm) for three weeks at a time (with one week off) and has many of the same side effects as the pill.

2. When is the best time to have sex in relation to your period if you don't want to get pregnant? Can you have sex while on your period with no protection?

While you are on your period, and the lining of your uterus is shedding, it is less likely that you will become pregnant. The release of an egg during ovulation usually happens 14 days afterwards. However, *the risk is still there* because people's bodies can be unpredictable. Therefore, it is best to act as though **the risk of pregnancy is always present, at any point in your cycle**. If you are sexually active and do not want to risk an unplanned pregnancy or sexually transmitted infection, it is very important to consider birth control a big part of your lifestyle. There are various methods of birth control that greatly reduce the risk of pregnancy; only condoms reduce the risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection. For free condoms or birth control you can visit Clinic (Mondays 4:30-8:00) or Women's Health Clinic (Thursdays 4-9) at 419 Graham Avenue.

3. My pubic hairs haven't curled yet. Am I sick?

Just like everyone's hair is different on the top of their heads, it's not all going to look the same with pubic hair. Everybody is different and natural and you shouldn't expect yourself to look like anything other than you. Some people have very curly pubic hair, some have very straight pubic hair. Sometimes, pubic hair is curly after you get out of the shower but flattened and straightened by wearing underwear all day. Whatever yours looks like is okay – you are not sick.

4. All my friends are having sex, I don't want to. What should I do?

Remember that old saying, if all your friends jumped off a bridge, would you? What you have to remember is to always do what you feel comfortable with. Why do you think that all of your friends are having sex? It could be that they are just saying that because they are uncomfortable with people thinking they are virgins. Regardless, you are the one who has to deal with your decisions – not your friends. For example, if you experienced an unplanned pregnancy your friends couldn't deal with that for you. If you don't feel ready, that's okay. In high school approximately 50% of teens have had sex and 50% have not. Whatever side you fall on is okay. Please don't feel pressured to do anything you don't want to.

5. How far must you put a tampon?

In order for the tampon to stay, you have to insert it as far into your vagina as a) you feel comfortable and b) so that you can't see the bottom of it. Try to make only the string visible. Often times girls don't insert it far enough and then it feels uncomfortable. You shouldn't feel the tampon at all. Don't worry about it going "too far up" or "getting lost". It can't happen! Your vagina is not an endless canal into your body. It has an end: nothing can magically enter into it and never come out again. 😊

6. What is "riding a guy"?

This is a slang term for a sexual intercourse position when the female is on top of the male.

7. I don't have many friends at school and don't live around here. How can I make friends?

What are you interested in? Sports, drama, music? Try not to be nervous. Many people feel like you do. There is always a risk involved when you try to start a conversation with someone you don't know very well – but the payoff is well worth it. The trick is to find what you love and pursue it. Try joining a sports team, student council, band or choir. You'll meet people who share your passion and have similar interests. The rest will come when you are confident in your awesome self.

**These answers are brought to you by your friendly, neighbourhood
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