

## Hormonal Birth Control 'What Am I' Activity

### Recommended Age: 14+

### Goals

- To explain what hormonal birth control is and how it works.
- To demonstrate common hormonal birth control used by youth.
- To highlight the importance of following instructions, side effects, and medication interactions.

### Have Ready

- If possible, demonstration versions of the pill, Depo Provera, the patch, NuvaRing, ECP, and IUD/S.<sup>i</sup> If unavailable, you could also use images. (See following pages.)

### Instructions

- Explain that the group is going to play a guessing game. You will read out a description of a type of birth control and youth can guess which one it is.
- Each type has up to three statements. Read one at a time until the youth guess the correct type.

### The Pill

1. I'm used for three weeks.
2. I'm taken every day, at around the same time of day.
3. For the fourth week, some people like to have a reminder that has no hormones in it.

FYI: The pill becomes effective after the first month of use.

### The Ring

1. I go inside the vagina.
2. I'm very flexible.
3. I slowly release hormones over three weeks.

## The Patch

1. I'm worn on the body for one week at a time, three weeks in a row.
2. I'm very sticky.
3. I pass hormones into the body through someone's skin.

**One problem with the patch is that it only comes in this one colour.** We know most of the world is not this colour, but unfortunately, the company only makes the patch for white bodies. **This is an example of racism. Racism is part of birth control's history and present.** From its invention when it was tested on Puerto Rican women without their informed consent<sup>ii</sup> to ongoing stories in Canada of Indigenous women being put on birth control without their consent.<sup>iii</sup> **Birth control has done a lot of good by allowing people choices for their body, but it must always come with consent.**

## Depo

1. I'm taken at a health care clinic.
2. I work for around 84 days.
3. My nickname is 'the shot'.

## IUD

1. I must be inserted at a health care clinic.
2. Depending on the brand, I can last from 2-½ to 5 years.
3. I can be made with hormones or with copper.

## Emergency Contraceptive/ECP (Plan B)

1. I am the only birth control used after sex happens.
2. I can be taken up to 5 days after sex.
3. You can buy me at most pharmacies without a prescription.

## **Additional Activities**

Ideally, this activity is an introduction to the following sections:

- Hormonal Birth Control Demonstrations
- Emergency Contraception Demonstration
- Condom Demo (see STI chapter)
- Internal Condom Demo (see STI chapter)

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<sup>i</sup>Lopez, L. M., Grimes, D. A., Schulz, K. F., Curtis, K. M., & Chen, M. (2014). Steroidal contraceptives: Effect on bone fractures in women. *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews*, 6. <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.cd006033.pub5>

<sup>ii</sup> Planned Parenthood Federation of America. (2015). The birth control pill: A history. In *Planned Parenthood* (pp. 1–14). [https://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/1514/3518/7100/Pill\\_History\\_FactSheet.pdf](https://www.plannedparenthood.org/files/1514/3518/7100/Pill_History_FactSheet.pdf)

<sup>iii</sup> MacMahon, M., & Steacy, L. (2021, May 21). *Claims B.C. Indigenous girls forcibly given IUD birth control shock youth advocate*. City News 1130. <https://www.citynews1130.com/2021/05/21/bc-indigenous-children-iud-forced/>