

## WHICH METHODS CAUSE ABORTION?

*The National Women's Health Information Center* provides a fairly exhaustive list of birth control methods on their website. Some of the methods they list do not have abortive mechanisms, some of the methods they list do have abortive mechanisms, and the rest of the listed methods are subjects of much debate. The list below includes abbreviated descriptions and is broken up into the three categories mentioned above.

### BIRTH CONTROL METHODS WHICH DO NOT CAUSE ABORTION

**Continuous Abstinence** - The only method that is 100% effective at preventing pregnancy and disease.

**Periodic Abstinence or Fertility Awareness Methods** - Being abstinent on the days you may be fertile or using a "barrier" method of birth control (condoms, diaphragms, or cervical caps) on fertile days.

**The Male Condom** - Prevents sperm from reaching the egg.

**The Female Condom** - Worn by the woman, prevents sperm from reaching the egg.

**Diaphragm** - A shallow latex cup that prevents sperm from reaching the egg, requires a visit with your health care provider for proper fitting.

**Cervical Cap** - A thimble-shaped latex cup that prevents sperm from reaching the egg, requires a visit with your health care provider for proper fitting.

**Surgical Sterilization (Tubal Ligation or Vasectomy)** - Permanent surgical methods of birth control. Tubal ligations prevent a woman's eggs from going reaching her uterus. Vasectomies to prevent sperm from entering a woman during intercourse.

### BIRTH CONTROL METHODS WHICH CAN CAUSE ABORTION

**Copper T IUD (Intrauterine Device)** - A small, copper-containing device that is shaped in the form of a "T." and placed inside the uterus by a health care provider. The copper arms prevent fertilization by keeping sperm from entering the fallopian tubes. *If fertilization does occur, the IUD would prevent the fertilized egg from implanting in the lining of the uterus.*

**Progestasert IUD (Intrauterine Device)** - A small plastic device that is shaped in the form of a "T." and placed inside the uterus by a health care provider. It contains the hormone progesterone, which causes the cervical mucus to thicken so sperm cannot reach the egg, *and so that a fertilized egg cannot successfully implant into the lining of the uterus.*

**The Mini-Pill** - The mini-pill only has one hormone, progestin, instead of both estrogen and progestin. Taken daily, the mini-pill reduces and thickens cervical mucus to prevent sperm from reaching the egg. *It also prevents a fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus (womb).*

**Emergency Contraception** - Consists of taking two doses of hormonal pills taken 12 hours apart and

started within three days after having unprotected intercourse *to prevent a potentially fertilized egg from implanting in the uterus.*

## **BIRTH CONTROL METHODS WHICH *MIGHT BE ABLE TO CAUSE AN ABORTION***

Within the pro-life community, there is much debate about the methods of birth control listed below. All of them function in basically the same way. They inject into a woman, by a variety of means, two hormones: estrogen and progestin. These work to 1) prevent ovulation, 2) thicken the mucus lining so as to prevent fertilization, and 3) make the uterus unsuitable for implantation (at least in theory). It is upon this last point where the differences of opinions lie. The first two mechanisms are clearly contraceptive, the third, if it occurs, is not. If you go to the American Association of Pro-Life Obstetricians and Gynecologists website, you will find two different position papers on this subject. One portion of their membership believes that birth control pills are abortifacient, and the other portion believes that, while the condition of the uterus is altered, it does not thereby prevent implantation. If you want to get to the bottom of this issue for the sake of your own conscience, it will take some focused research, beginning with the papers above. Randy Alcorn also has a very thorough and well-documented book available for purchase or download which argues that the birth control pill does cause abortions (Alcorn and his wife had used the pill before his painful discovery). If you're not willing to put the time in to research this issue for yourself, or if you start the research and decide there's just too much information to sort through, for you, there is only one safe conclusion. If you're not absolutely convinced in your own mind that the pill is *not* abortifacient, then the only course of action is to not use it.

**Oral Contraceptives** - Also called "the pill", delivers hormones orally through a daily pill.

**Implant (Norplant and Norplant 2)** - This product was taken off the market in July 2002, delivers hormones via "rods" that are placed under the skin.

**Depo-Provera** - Hormones delivered through injections, or shots, in the buttocks or arm every three months.

**The Patch (Ortho Evra)** - Hormones delivered through a skin patch worn on the lower abdomen, buttocks, or upper body.

**The Hormonal Vaginal Contraceptive Ring (NuvaRing)** - Hormones delivered through a ring that is inserted the vagina for three weeks at a time.