



A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

Avoiding the Baby Surprise

Contraceptive Use among Postpartum Women by Contraceptive Method Effectiveness — 12 States and New York City, 2004–2006

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[Announcer] This podcast is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. CDC — safer, healthier people.

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the MMWR, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Most people love surprises, but when it comes to having a baby, a planned pregnancy offers the best opportunity for having a safe pregnancy and delivering a healthy baby. Women who didn't intend to get pregnant and those who give birth within 24 months of a previous birth are at higher risk for complications, both for themselves and their baby.

Dr. Cheryl Robbins is an epidemiologist with CDC's Division of Reproductive Health, and she's joining us today to discuss the importance of avoiding surprise pregnancies. Welcome to the show, Cheryl.

[Dr. Robbins] Thank you, Bob.

[Dr. Gaynes] Cheryl, are unplanned pregnancies a problem in the U.S.?

[Dr. Robbins] Yes they are. Forty-nine percent of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended.

[Dr. Gaynes] What percentage of women have a baby within two years of a previous birth?

[Dr. Robbins] Twenty-one percent of women give birth within two years of a previous birth, Bob.

[Dr. Gaynes] What types of complications are common in either of these two situations, Cheryl?

[Dr. Robbins] Well, with inadequate birth spacing, you have problems like pre-term delivery and delivering a baby that's small for its gestational age, or what people call low birth weight, and then you also have higher risk of the baby dying. And as far as unintended pregnancy, you have similar complications, but in addition, we know that half of all unintended pregnancies end in abortion, and then, among the women who do carry an unintended pregnancy to term, they have higher rates of detrimental prenatal behaviors, like smoking or drinking during pregnancy and not getting sufficient prenatal care

[Dr. Gaynes] Does the age of the mother contribute to the risk of an unintended pregnancy?

[Dr. Robbins] Actually, there is an association between age and unintended pregnancy. We know that teens and woman who are 40 years and older have the highest rates of unintended pregnancy.

[Dr. Gaynes] Cheryl, what contraceptive methods are most effective at preventing pregnancy?

[Dr. Robbins] Well, the most effective method for a woman is going to be the one that she will use consistently and correctly, but the methods that have the highest effectiveness rates include the birth control pill; the shot, which is also called Depo-Provera or Lunelle; IUDs; the patch; and the vaginal ring. There's also permanent methods, such as sterilization for males or females.

[Dr. Gaynes] Cheryl, what methods are least effective?

[Dr. Robbins] Well, unintended pregnancy is often associated with women not using any method, but sometimes women use methods that have higher rates of failure, and have an unintended pregnancy. Those methods include the diaphragm, cervical cap, rhythm, or withdrawal.

[Dr. Gaynes] Where can listeners get more information about preventing an unintended pregnancy?

[Dr. Robbins] They can go to our website at www.cdc.gov and type in the word "contraception" in the search box.

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Cheryl. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Cheryl Robbins about ways to prevent unintended pregnancies.

Remember, use of reliable birth control is the best strategy to avoid an unintended pregnancy. Discuss future family planning needs and the most effective birth control options for *you* with your healthcare provider.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit www.cdc.gov or call 1-800-CDC-INFO, 24/7.