

Women's Health **UPDATE**

Just The Facts About The Birth Control Pill

(NAPSA)—Despite its popularity and 40 years of use, a recent, nationwide survey of women aged 18-35 found that many believe several myths about birth control pills. Most notably, women believe that all birth control pills cause weight gain and that a “break” from the Pill is necessary.

“It’s important for women to be educated about the pill so that they can base their birth control decisions on facts, not myths,” said A. George Thomas, M.D., clinical associate professor at the Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York City. “We take for granted that women are fully informed about the Pill, but I find that many of my patients are not.”

Ortho-McNeil Pharmaceutical, Inc., makers of the most widely prescribed birth control pill, ORTHO TRI-CYCLEN® (norgestimate/ethinyl estradiol) Tablets, has developed the brochure “Just the Facts—What You Thought You Knew About the Pill” to address these birth control pill myths. Women can order the free brochure by calling 1-877-323-2200, or by visiting www.orthotri-cyclen.com.

Fact #1—Not All Birth Control Pills Cause Weight Gain

Though more than 61 percent of women surveyed believe that the Pill causes weight gain, an equal number of women tend to gain weight as lose weight while taking a birth control pill. In clinical studies of ORTHO TRI-CYCLEN, women reported no more weight gain than women who were taking inactive pills. Women concerned about weight gain should talk with their healthcare professional.

Fact #2—Women Don’t Need A Break From The Pill

Almost half of survey respondents believe that women need to take a break from using the Pill. Today, more women are using the Pill and staying on it longer. And,



research shows that women do not need to take a break from the Pill. Healthcare professionals can prescribe birth control pills to healthy, nonsmoking women over 40.

Fact #3—Not All Birth Control Pills Are Clinically Proven To Treat Acne

Forty-three percent of survey respondents believe that the birth control pill can be an effective acne treatment. However, there is only one pill that is approved by the Food and Drug Administration and clinically proven to help reduce moderate acne and maintain clearer skin. In clinical studies, nearly nine out of 10 women who took ORTHO TRI-CYCLEN showed significant improvements in their skin.

ORTHO TRI-CYCLEN is indicated for the prevention of pregnancy and for the treatment of moderate acne in females 15 years of age or older, who have no known contraindications to oral contraceptive therapy, desire contraception, have achieved menstruation and are unresponsive to topical anti-acne medications.

Fact #4—There Is No Clinical Evidence That The Pill Affects Fertility

The good news is that almost 80 percent of women surveyed do not believe the Pill can cause infertility. When a woman is ready to become pregnant, she should consult her healthcare professional and stop taking her birth control pills. Most women experience a rapid return to fertility.

Fact #5—The Pill Does Not Protect Against HIV or Other Sexually Transmitted Diseases

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the consistent and correct use of latex condoms can greatly reduce a person’s risk of transmitting or acquiring sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV infection.

Oral contraceptives are not for everybody. Most side effects of the Pill are not serious. And those that do occur infrequently. Serious risks, which can be life-threatening, include blood clots, stroke, and heart attacks, and are increased if you smoke cigarettes. ***Cigarette smoking increases the risk of serious cardiovascular side effects, especially if you’re over 35. Women who use oral contraceptives are strongly advised not to smoke.*** Some studies have reported an increase in the risk of developing breast cancer among women who use oral contraceptives. However, the majority of studies have found no overall increase in this risk. You should talk to your doctor or healthcare professional about how this risk relates to your use of the Pill. Some women should not use the Pill, including women who have blood clots, certain cancers, a history of heart attack or stroke, as well as those who are or may be pregnant. ***The Pill does not protect against HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases.***

For more information about birth control, sexually transmitted diseases and vaginal and urinary tract infections, visit Women In The Know at www.womenintheknow.com. Information about ORTHO TRI-CYCLEN and other Ortho-McNeil products can be found on the Internet at www.orthotri-cyclen.com and www.ortho-mcneil.com. Please see full U.S. prescribing information.