



## Discussion Guide

For Adults Working with Teens

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### Lesson: Getting Smart about the Pill

Birth control pills (the Pill) remain the most popular method of contraception among sexually active teens. These days, with birth control pills being marketed for the prevention of mild acne, many girls utilize the Pill for noncontraceptive reasons. And while taking the Pill may seem simple to most adults, teens frequently have challenges taking it correctly—one pill every day at about the same time. Teens have often heard many myths about girls who take the Pill and the protection it does and does not offer. This activity will help dispel common myths about this popular birth control option.

**Learning Objective:** By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- List two myths and two facts about birth control pills

Materials:

- Copies of **“Getting Smart About the Pill”**
- Copies of **“The Pill Quiz: Protection One Day at a Time”**
- Pens/pencils
- Small prizes (candy, stickers, etc.)

**Procedure:**

1. Distribute copies of **“The Pill Quiz: Protection One Day at a Time,”** and instruct students to complete the quiz with a partner. Inform students that prizes will be awarded to the pairs that get the most correct answers. Allow students time to complete the quiz.

2. Distribute copies of **“Getting Smart about the Pill,”** and instruct students to read the article and correct their quiz with the information in the article. Allow students time to read and correct their quiz, and then review answers with the whole group for discussion and any possible clarification. Award prizes to those students with the most correct answers.

*This Discussion Guide was created by Nora Gelperin, M.Ed. For additional lessons, go to [http://answer.rutgers.edu/page/lesson\\_plans](http://answer.rutgers.edu/page/lesson_plans).*

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## *The Pill Quiz: Protection One Day at a Time*

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|--|------|-------|
| 1. Birth control pills are now available over the counter.   | TRUE | FALSE |
| 2. Birth control pills protect against certain sexually transmitted infections, like chlamydia and gonorrhea.    | TRUE | FALSE |
| 3. A teenage girl can get birth control pills without her parents' permission.                                   | TRUE | FALSE |
| 4. Birth control pills do not cause weight gain.   | TRUE | FALSE |
| 5. If a girl has been taking the Pill for a long time, it's important for her to stop, to give her body a break. | TRUE | FALSE |
| 6. Birth control pills do not interfere with a girl's chance of becoming pregnant later in life.                 | TRUE | FALSE |
| 7. Birth control pills cause certain types of cancer.  | TRUE | FALSE |
| 8. Birth control pills are very effective at preventing pregnancy.   | TRUE | FALSE |

### **Answer Key—The Pill Quiz: Protection One Day at a Time**

1. FALSE Birth control pills are a prescription form of medicine that a girl needs to get after having an exam by her doctor or health care provider. She can get her prescription filled at a drugstore or pharmacy.
2. FALSE Birth control pills do NOT prevent any sexually transmitted infections, only pregnancy. It's very important for people to use condoms and other latex barriers every time they have sex (oral, anal, or vaginal).
3. TRUE There are no laws to prevent a teen girl from getting birth control pills. She does not need her parents' permission.
4. TRUE Contrary to what most people have heard, birth control pills are not associated with significant weight gain. A girl is just as likely to lose weight, as she is to gain weight while taking the Pill.
5. FALSE A girl can safely take birth control pills for many years without harming her health. The pills that are currently available contain a much lower dose of hormones than when the Pill was first invented in the 1960s. Subsequently, there is no medical need to "take a break" from the Pill.
6. TRUE Birth control pills prevent ovulation and thicken the cervical mucus. She will not release an egg if she takes the Pill correctly. The Pill will not effect her ability to become pregnant later in life.
7. FALSE Birth control pills actually protect against ovarian and uterine cancer and have no impact on a woman's risk of breast cancer.
8. TRUE Birth control pills, if taken perfectly are 99 percent effective at preventing pregnancy. Factoring in typical human error, the typical user effectiveness rate is 95 percent.