

The Consequences of Contraception

by Robert Babecka

Much of our society sees contraception as a boon to mankind. This is because it offers reduced risk of pregnancy for each act of sexual pleasure.

It also offers some unintended consequences:

- * A drop in morality
- * An increase in out-of-wedlock pregnancies and abortion
- * An increase in venereal disease
- * A reduced respect for women and marriage

A Drop in Morality

Sexual activity among teenagers has increased significantly since 1950. A national survey, conducted by the Health and Human Services National Center for Health Statistics in 1995, found that 50 percent of single women 15-19 years of age and 55 percent of single males in the same age group had participated in sexual intercourse.

It's more than just having sex. As late as 1971, most sexually active teenage females had only one sexual partner. In 1988, most sexually active teenage females had more than one partner...and the number of teenage females having sex with over three partners and over five partners had more than doubled. So even the young people having sex today are having sex with more people. (Center for Disease Control)

Things look even worse from a survey of Georgia teens. Two of every three Georgia teenagers surveyed in 1993 were sexually active. Almost one third of those sexually active had four or more partners. (Georgia Department of Human Resources)

The cause and effect relationship is easy to establish. People will always have challenges to chastity. When unwanted pregnancy is removed as a negative consequence to illicit sex, these challenges will increase in frequency and be less likely to be met with fortitude. Once contraception is accepted among married couples, it is almost impossible to keep it from young singles. Additionally, as these behaviors became more commonplace, societal norms dropped drastically. This can be seen by even the most casual examination of the changes in television programming and movie content over the last forty years. These changes have a snowball effect. As societal norms lower the drop is accelerated with each new generation.

The use of contraception is not the only factor. There is always an inclination toward unchaste behavior in every society. Cultural and religious norms, along with natural consequences such as unwanted pregnancy and venereal disease can be thought of as the barriers to keep a society from moving freely down this incline. When natural consequences are removed (even if only in people's minds) the equilibrium previously established is destroyed. Unless religious piety or cultural standards are suddenly and dramatically increased there will have to be an increase in adultery and a drop in sexual

morality. Its similar to what happens when weights are removed from one side of a balance scale.

Parents also lose a lot of ammunition when they contracept within their marriages. How can they convince their children there is a nobler purpose for remaining chaste until marriage, if that purpose is reduced to simple sexual pleasure.

An Increase in Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancies and Abortion

What are the results of this change in behavior? The birth rate among teenagers is about fourtimes the rate it was in 1950. In 1960 only 5 percent of the births in our country were to unmarried women. In 1992 births to unmarried women were over 30 percent of the total. Keep in mind that abortion was less common in 1950, since it was not legal. Today, among teenagers there is about one abortion for every two live births. (Center for Disease Control) This means many of the pregnancies caused by our change in sexual norms among teenagers are hidden from the pregnancy statistics.

Over half of the women and girls seeking abortions are there because of contraceptive failure. Eighty percent are experienced contraceptive users, but many of these either admit to being careless in their use or not using them "temporarily." The key is that their sexual behavior patterns were already established by using contraception. The other twenty percent mostly reflect people aware of contraceptives. Only two percent of those seeking abortion are there because of rape or serious threats to the health of the mother.

How can this be? Contraception is supposed to prevent unwanted pregnancies. The fact is contraception only reduces the likelihood that a particular sexual act will result in pregnancy. This would reduce unwanted pregnancies, provided the illusion of risk-free sex did not drastically increase the frequency of "shots on goal."

So what is the likelihood of pregnancy someone using contraceptives?

(Note: Actual failure rate of 100 women who start out the year using a given method, and who use it correctly and consistently, the actual failure rate is the lowest observed failure rate.)

Method	Actual Failure Rate
Combined Birth Control Pills	2.0 %
Progestin Only Birth Control Pills	2.5%
IUD	4.0 %
Condom	10.0 %
Diaphragm and Jelly	10.0 %
Cervical Cap	13.0 %
Foam, Creams, Jellies, Suppositories	15.0 %

Source: ~*Contraceptive Technology*, 1982-1983~, 11th rev. ed., (New York: Irvington Publishers, 1982), p. 112

Confidence in contraception increases the risk of unwise sexual activity, resulting in an increase in unwanted pregnancies and abortion.

An Increase in Venereal Disease

The HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to grow in Georgia. The total number of AIDS cases diagnosed by the end of August 1997 was over 18,000. Some 30,000 Georgians are estimated infected with the HIV virus. Georgia had the eighth highest number of AIDS cases in the United States. (Georgia Department of Human Resources)

Nearly 12,000 Georgia teens aged 13-19 were reported to have sexually transmitted diseases in 1995. Experts believe that many cases of sexually transmitted diseases are not reported, making the impact of these diseases on teens much higher. (Georgia Department of Human Resources)

The Alliance for Chastity compiled by the following time line.

Prior to 1960, there were only 2 important venereal diseases, syphilis and gonorrhea. Both were easily treated.

1976 - Chlamydia first found to cause genital infection. It was a rare problem then. It is now the most common venereal disease.

1981 - HIV (AIDS) was identified. There were only a few cases then. It has since killed over 140,000 Americans. HIV infected people double in number every 2.8 years.

1982 - Herpes became common. Over 30 million Americans are now infected. That number is equivalent to the entire population of the states of Nebraska, Iowa, Kansas, Colorado, Wyoming, South Dakota, North Dakota, Oklahoma and Texas.

1985 - The human papilloma virus is becoming more common. It causes genital warts and cancer in both areas.

1990 - Cases involving penicillin resistant strains of gonorrhea were found in all 50 states!

1992 - Pelvic Inflammatory Disease, which is almost always caused by chlamydia or gonorrhea has become a terrible problem. One million American women and girls are infected annually. This disease causes pelvic pain and infertility. Except for pregnancy, it is the most common cause of hospitalization for women between the ages of 15 and 55.

This history paints a pretty grim picture. Its more grim when you realize that many of these diseases go undetected for years and that someone engaging in sex outside of

marriage is much more likely to contract a venereal disease than become a parent. Why is that? There are at least three reasons.

1. Most forms of contraception do not offer any protection against the spread of venereal disease. The only contraceptive that offers any protection is the condom. Unfortunately, it has a very high failure rate even for pregnancy.
2. You can't get pregnant most days of the month, but you can always catch a venereal disease.
3. Naturally occurring defects in latex are about 50 times larger than the HIV or AIDS virus. Condoms that pass government standards contain gaps large enough for the AIDS virus to drive a truck through!

Using a condom does not make sex "safe."

A Reduced Respect for Women and Marriage

I offer no statistics to support this statement. I only offer my personal experience and that of men I know who have previously used contraception and stopped. There may be men who use contraception and have more respect for women and marriage than I; however, there is always room for improvement.