

TO: Jenn Giroux, Executive Director
Human Life International America (HLI America)

FROM: Kellyanne Conway, President & CEO
the polling company™, inc./WomanTrend

DATE: December 1, 2010

RE: Analysis of Findings – Nationwide Online Survey of Women

METHODOLOGY

the polling company™, inc./WomanTrend is pleased to present to **Human Life International America (HLI America)** the findings of a recent nationwide online survey of 808 women aged 15-44 and living in the United States. Survey participants were screened to ensure they were women falling into these age parameters. The sample is proportionate to the U.S. population by factors including age, gender, and Census division (by state).

Nineteen substantive questions and 11 demographic questions were included in the online survey. All substantive questions were closed-ended in nature. Women were piped through series of questions depending on their use of oral contraceptives or other forms of hormonal birth control currently or in the past; women who have never used such contraceptive methods were excluded from questions about personal usage. All questions were approved by Jenn Giroux, Executive Director of HLI America, prior to data collection. The topline data with full question language follows this analysis.

The survey was fielded November 24-30, 2010. Respondents for this survey were selected from an opt-in panel, had expressed prior consent to participate in online surveys such as this, and were targeted based on their previously provided status as women between these ages. Parental consent was required for the women aged 15-17 who participated in the survey. All respondents were made aware of the sensitive nature of the topic prior to data collection, and were assured of their confidentiality and anonymity in response.

When sample is based on a self-selected population and not a probability sample (in which everyone in the population has a non-zero chance of being selected), no conclusions can be drawn with respect to sampling error.^[1] Like any other traditional telephone survey, online polls are subject to many types of error.

To ensure that all respondents operated from the same basis of knowledge and understanding of terminology, the following disclaimer was provided on all question pages bearing a substantive question:

For the purposes of this survey, the term “hormonal contraceptives or birth control” includes oral contraceptives (sometimes called “the Pill”), intra-uterine devices (IUDs) or implants, contraceptive injections, contraceptive patches, or vaginal rings (like Nuva-Ring) that have hormones designed to prevent pregnancy.

^[1] American Association of Public Opinion Research (AAPOR).

KEY FINDINGS

Women Deem Pill and Other Forms of Hormonal Birth Control to be “Positive” for Society; Smaller Numbers Agree it has Helped Marriages and Relationships

Majorities of women said that American society, marriages, and relationships between men and women have been positively affected as a result of access to the Pill and other forms of hormonal birth control. Fewer than one-in-ten women said that these institutions have suffered as a result of access to and use of contraceptives.

Majority of Women Have Popped “the Pill” and Did So at Age 18 or Younger

Thirty-five percent of women aged 15-44 who were surveyed said that they currently take oral contraceptives, while an additional 43% said that they had in the past but no longer do. Fewer than one-in-five (19%) said they had never used oral contraceptives. Women were less likely to have used another form of hormonal birth control – like contraceptive shots or patches – as two-thirds said they had never done so; 11% said they currently do, and 19% said they did at one point. Naturally, use of birth control increased with age, but there were very few differences in rates of usage – past or present – as it related to other demographic factors.

Fifty-three percent of women said that they first used birth control at or before achieving adulthood, with a third saying they did so *before* the age of 18. Three-fifths of women said they began taking the Pill to prevent pregnancy, and nearly two-thirds said that is the reason why they are still on it. This was the top reason across all demographic groups. Regulation of menstruation was the second-most common reason why women began oral contraceptives and remain on it (21% and 19%, respectively).

Three-in-five women said they took the Pill (or used another form of hormonal birth control) *after* becoming sexually-active for the first time.

Dr. Me – Women Look Inward for Advice on Birth Control, but Physicians Play a Key Role in the Distribution of the Pill

Women were tied with health professionals as the top source of “recommendation” for using oral contraceptives or another form of hormonal birth control: 36% of women said that they came to the conclusion on their own, while 36% relied on some type of medical provider: 26% doctor/nurse at a private office; 8% doctor/nurse at women’s health clinic; 2% doctor/nurse at a campus clinic. Parents were the impetuses for 13% of women overall, and for 33% of girls aged 15-17 who have used or are using hormonal birth control. Separately, 32% of those surveyed said that they consulted with friends, 31% with parents, and 24% with a sexual partner before beginning to use hormonal birth control; 29% said they spoke with no one.

In a separate question, 65% of women – including majorities of women of all demographic groups – said that they first began taking birth control from their physician; 24% said they obtained it at a women’s health clinic.

Benign “Side Effects” More Likely to Be Shared with Women than Serious Life-Threatening Consequences, Yet More Women Concerned Than Carefree About Link to Breast Cancer

Given a list of six possible side effects of taking birth control, no one single response was cited by a majority of responses as something they had heard or learned. While 49% of women were warned of

weight gain and 23% of headaches, only 40% were told of blood clots and the risk of stroke and 19% of increased risks of breast cancer.

All women surveyed – regardless of contraceptive use – said that knowing “there is new evidence to suggest that taking hormonal contraceptives may increase the risk of breast cancer” would give them serious pause; 44% concluded they would be less likely to take them, and 3% would be more likely. Still, 44% said such research made no difference to them.

In a second question, 54% of women said that use of the Pill for pregnancy prevention would not be worth it if further research shows that there is a definitive link between use of hormonal birth control and cancer; 32% said the risk would be worth the benefits of pregnancy prevention.

ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Women Perceive Positive Impacts of Pill on Society, Marriages, and Relationships

When asked to reflect on the bearing hormonal contraceptives have had on America, majorities of women aged 15-44 who were surveyed acknowledged wide-reaching implications for the Pill. By margins of at least 6-to-1, the impact of birth control was deemed more positive than negative on society, marriages, and relationships in the U.S.

<i>Do you think that hormonal contraceptives or birth control, including “the Pill,” have had a (ROTATED) positive or negative impact on _____? Or has the impact been neutral?</i>	Positive	Neutral	Negative
American Society	64%	19%	9%
Marriages in the U.S.	56%	29%	6%
Quality of Relationships Between Men & Women	57%	26%	8%

Impact on American Society

- White women were notably more likely than Hispanic or Black women to recognize the impact as positive, though majorities of all three ethnic/racial cohorts deemed it such (69%, 57%, and 58%, respectively).
- Thirty-seven percent of 15-17 said the impact of the Pill has been neutral, compared to no more than 20% of any other age cohort.
- At least three-in-five women in all four major Census regions – North, Midwest, South, and West – viewed the Pill as being beneficial.
- Church-going Catholics were nearly four times more negative than the average toward the Pill (26% vs. 9%), but still the plurality acknowledged its impact as positive (48%). Majorities of Protestants who attend religious services frequently (56%) or infrequently (71%), as well as Evangelical Protestants (55%) and Mainline Protestants (76%) also assessed the Pill as constructive.

Impact on Marriages in the United States

- Though a plurality of Black women (48%) and majorities of White and Hispanic women (60% and 52%, respectively) were positive toward the Pill, Black women were twice as likely as White women or Hispanic women to deem the Pill as having a negative impact on marriages (13% Black vs. 5% White vs. 6% Hispanic).
- Sixteen percent of women aged 15-17 said the Pill has had negative consequences for marriages, compared to no more than 9% of any other age cohort.
- No geographic disparities emerged, as at least 53% in all four major regions acknowledged the Pill as having a positive impact, and no more than 7% deemed it having a negative impact.
- Wedded women were notably more likely than non-married women¹ to say that the institution of marriage has been positively affected as a result of the Pill (64% vs. 52%). However, unmarried women were no more negative toward it; rather, they were just more neutral (24% married vs. 32% unmarried).
- As was the case in the previous question, Catholics who attend Mass frequently were more inclined than the average to say that the Pill has had a negative impact on marriages (25% vs. 6%). Still, a majority of church-going Catholic women (52%) said the impact had been positive.

Impact on Quality of Relationships between Men & Women

- With the exception of 15-17 year olds, majorities of women of all ages acknowledged the Pill as having a positive impact on the quality of relationships. The plurality of 15-17 year olds said the consequences have been neutral, but these young women were nearly two times as likely as the average to deem the effects as negative (15% vs. 8%).
- Majorities of White (61%) and Hispanic women (56%), as well as a plurality of Black women (49%) judged the Pill as having a positive influence; a plurality of Asian women² (46%) said the outcome has been neutral.
- Majorities of women of various relationship statuses also judged the outcome as positive: 51% of single women not in relationships; 60% of single women in relationships; 61% of married women; and 66% of separated/divorced women.
- Mass-going Catholics were notably more likely than the average to deem the Pill as having a negative impact on relationships (27% vs. 8%), yet still the plurality (39%) acknowledged it as positive and 32% as neutral. Fifteen percent of Evangelical Protestants and all Protestants who attend services at least weekly also stood out as more likely to say the Pill has been detrimental; still, 49% of each of the two cohorts said it has been positive.

¹ Inclusive of women who said they are single and in a relationship; single and not in a relationship; separated; divorced; or widowed.

² N=24.

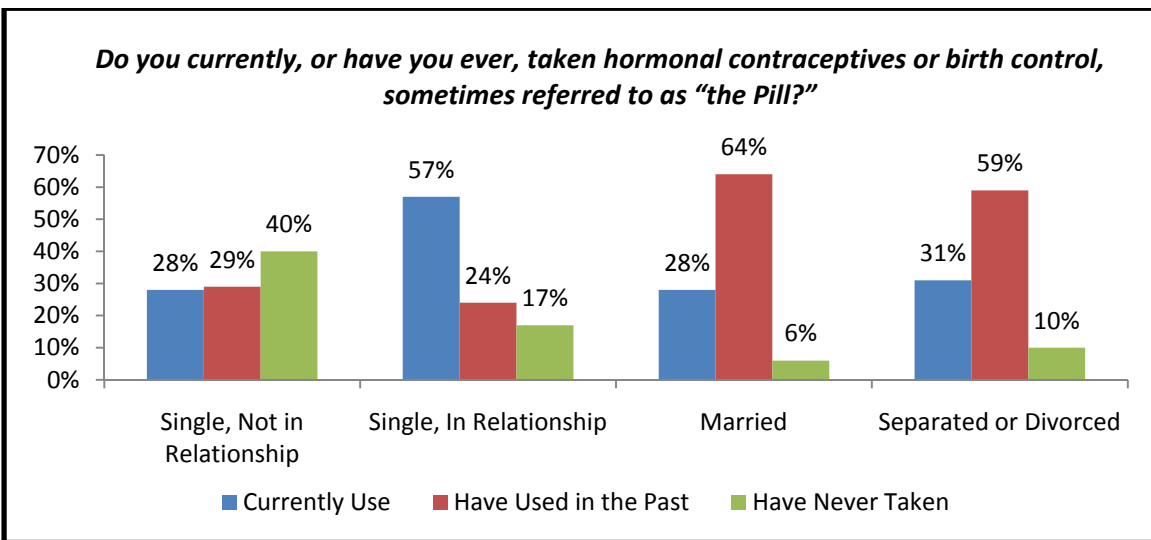
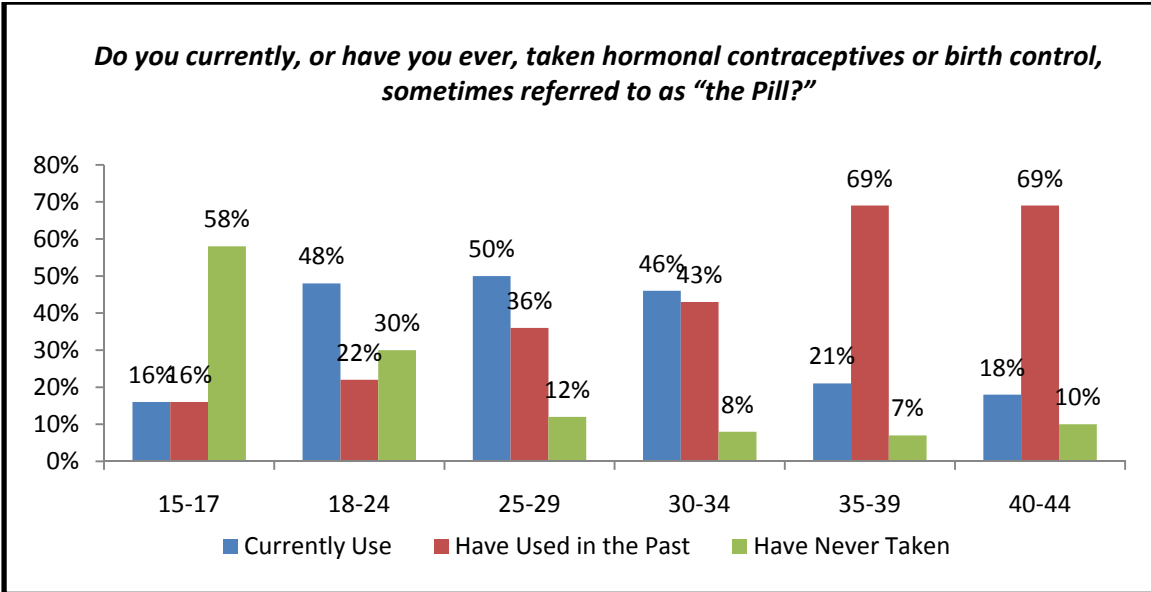
Personal Health Inventory: Only One-in-Five Women Say They Have Never Used Oral Contraceptives

Women who were surveyed were more likely to have used oral contraceptives (the Pill) than any other form of hormonal birth control. This is consistent with data collected by the Centers for Disease Control. Overall, more than one-in-three (35%) women of reproductive age (15-44 years) said that they currently use the Pill while an additional 43% said they have taken it in the past but no longer do. Rates of usage of other forms of hormonal birth control were lower – two-thirds said that they had never used such contraceptive methods.

<i>Do you currently, or have you ever, taken hormonal contraceptives or birth control, sometimes referred to as “the Pill?”</i>		<i>Do you currently, or have you ever, used another form of hormonal birth control, including intra-uterine devices (IUDs), contraceptive injections, contraceptive patches, or vaginal rings?</i>	
35%	YES, CURRENTLY TAKE IT	11%	YES, CURRENTLY USE
43%	YES, I HAVE TAKEN IT IN THE PAST BUT NO LONGER DO	19%	YES, IN THE PAST BUT NO LONGER DO
19%	NO, I HAVE NEVER TAKEN IT	67%	NO, HAVE NEVER
1%	DO NOT KNOW	1%	DO NOT KNOW
2%	REFUSE TO ANSWER	1%	REFUSE TO ANSWER

A graph and table on the following page outline the usage of the Pill by age and other varying demographic and psychographic factors. A few key highlights include:

- Only 30% of women aged 18-24 have never taken the Pill; the number drops to no more than 12% of women aged 25 and older. Nearly three-in-five (58%) women aged 15-17 have not taken the Pill.
- White and Hispanic women were more likely to be on the Pill now than Black women, and Black women were more likely to have never taken the Pill at all.
- College-educated women were notably more likely than those without college degrees to be on the Pill.
- Single women in relationships were more likely to be on the Pill than women of any other marital or relationship status. Only 6% of married women surveyed said they had never taken oral contraceptives.
- Religion or even religiosity (frequency of attendance) mattered not. Near-identical percentages of Catholic women who attend Mass at least weekly or who attend less often said that they had never taken the Pill (18% and 15%, respectively). Similarly, 21% of Protestants who attend religious services one time a week or more and 17% who attend less often said they had never taken the Pill. However, infrequent Protestants were substantially more likely than those who attend frequently to say they are *currently taking the Pill* (41% vs. 26%). No such difference emerged among Catholic women.



<i>Do you currently, or have you ever, taken hormonal contraceptives or birth control, sometimes referred to as “the Pill?”</i>			
	Currently Use	Have Used in the Past	Have Never Taken
White	39%	42%	16%
Black	21%	46%	29%
Hispanic	34%	48%	15%
Asian (n=24)	23%	38%	39%
North	39%	39%	21%
Midwest	39%	35%	24%
South	30%	50%	16%
West	36%	45%	16%
Less Than High School	15%	26%	52%
High School Only	22%	32%	41%
Some College	30%	49%	19%
No College (Net)	27%	42%	28%
College (Net)	41%	45%	12%
College Only	27%	42%	28%
Post-Graduate	41%	46%	11%
Frequent Catholics	30%	52%	18%
Infrequent Catholics	36%	48%	15%
Frequent Protestant	26%	52%	21%
Infrequent Protestants	41%	41%	17%
Mainline Protestants	39%	43%	18%
Evangelical Protestants	30%	50%	19%
Religiously Unaffiliated/ Agnostic/Atheist	41%	38%	21%
Never Attend Religious Services	38%	42%	18%

The next series of questions were asked ONLY of women who said that they currently take the Pill, have taken the Pill in the past, or who currently use or have used another form of hormonal contraceptives.

More than One-Half of Women Began Hormonal Contraceptives At Age 18 Or Younger

As the adjacent textbox outlines, 53% of women who have used hormonal birth control did so for the first time at or before the age of 18 with more than one-third beginning *before* age 18.

- Fifty-six of White women who have taken or used hormonal birth control did so at or before the age of 18, compared to 51% of Black women and 45% of Hispanic women who have used such contraceptive measures.
- Forty-four percent of women in the Northeast who currently take or who have taken the Pill began at or before 18, compared to 56% of Midwestern women, 54% of Southerners, and 54% of Westerners who do.
- Though college-educated women were more likely than those without degrees to say that they have used hormonal birth control, they were much less likely to have first taken it *before* college than their counterparts: 48% of women with Bachelor’s degrees or more said they first took it before or at the age of 18 (when most women start college), compared to 59% of women who did not attend or complete college.

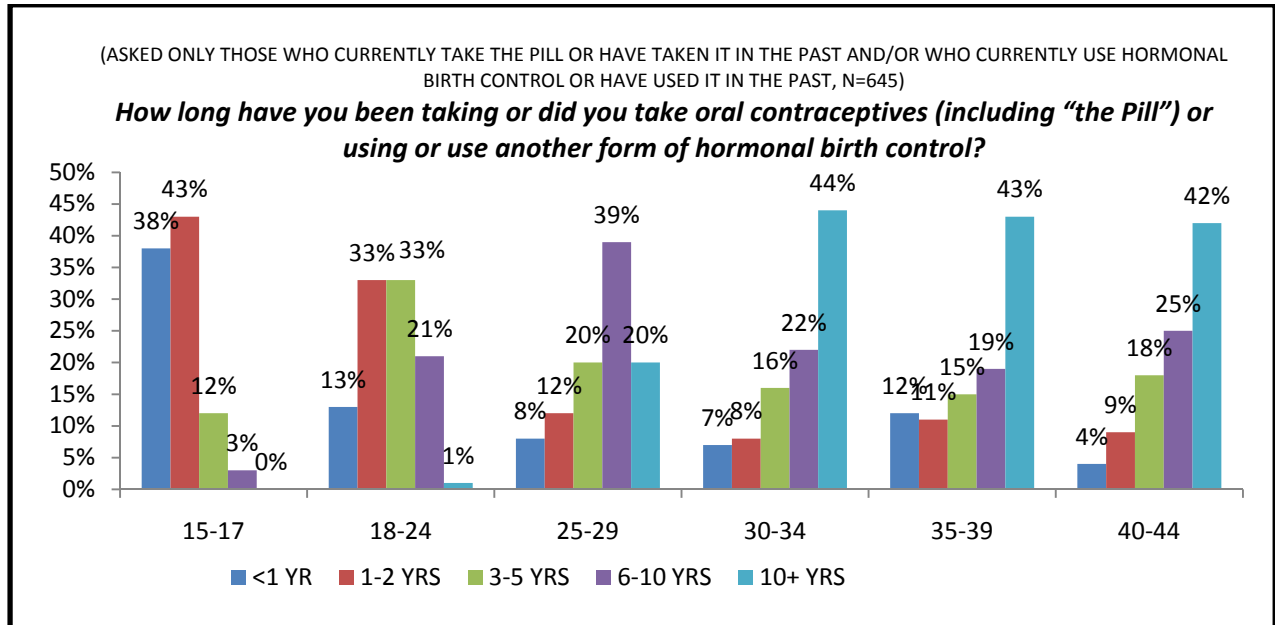
(ASKED ONLY THOSE WHO CURRENTLY TAKE THE PILL OR HAVE TAKEN IT IN THE PAST AND/OR WHO CURRENTLY USE HORMONAL BIRTH CONTROL OR HAVE USED IT IN THE PAST, N=645)

How old were you when you first took oral contraceptives (including “the Pill”) or used another form of hormonal birth control?

4%	14 OR YOUNGER
7%	15
11%	16
12%	17
19%	18
11%	19
9%	20
8%	21
5%	22
4%	23
1%	24
2%	25
4%	26-29
1%	30-34
1%	35-39
-	40-44
2%	DO NOT KNOW/CANNOT REMEMBER
*	REFUSE TO ANSWER

Preponderance of Women of Reproductive Age Have Been on Pill for Three or More Years

One-quarter (26%) of women said that they had been on the Pill or been using hormonal birth control for two years or less, while more than seven-in-ten (72%) said they have been doing so for three years or more. Naturally, as a respondent’s age increased, so too did the length of time she reported using hormonal birth control. **More than three-in-five women aged 30-34, 35-39, and 40-44 said they had been taking oral contraceptives or another form of hormonal birth control for at least ten years.**

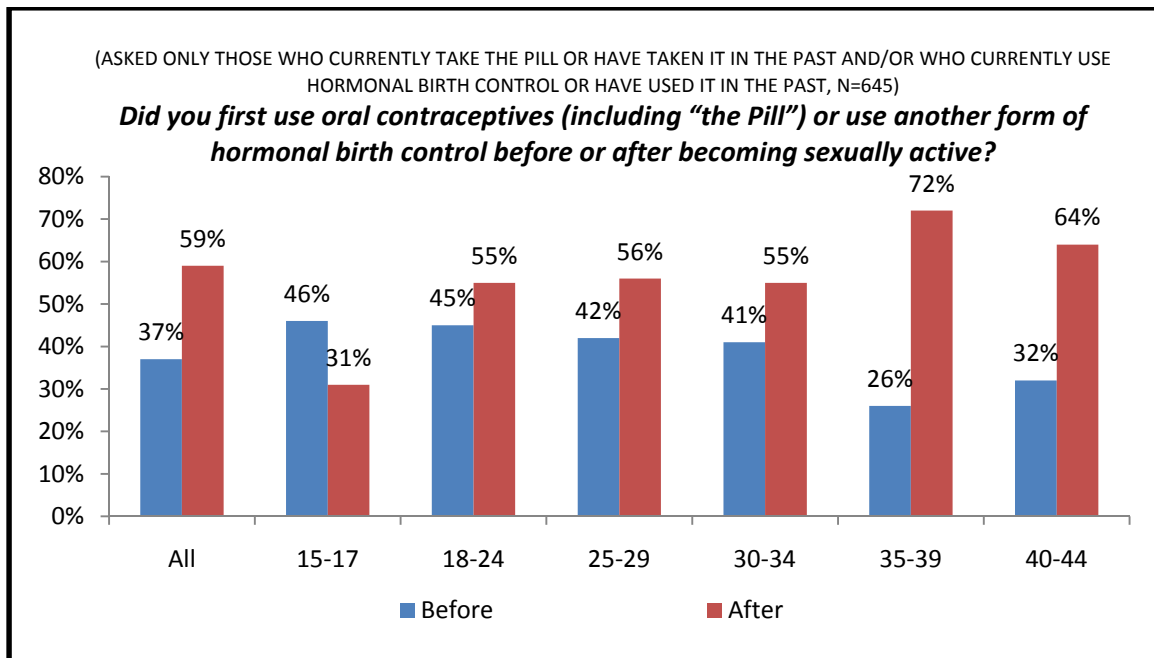


- Women who began using hormonal birth control before the age of 18 were notably more likely than those who started after the age of 18 to say that they had been doing so for ten or more years (36% vs. 24%).
- Thirty-one percent of White and Black women alike said that they have been taking or using hormonal birth control for more than ten years, compared to 20% of Hispanic women. Part of this difference can be explained by the fact that the Hispanic population is considerably younger than the White and Black populations overall. Forty-one percent of Hispanic women said that they have been using hormonal birth control for two years or less, compared to 24% of Black women and 22% of White women.
- Thirty-four percent of college-educated women said that they had been taking the Pill or using another form of birth control for ten or more years, compared to 19% of women without college degrees. Again, this difference can be explained by the overall differences in ages between these two subgroups.

Majority of Women Began Sexual Activity BEFORE First Encounter with Hormonal Birth Control

Three-in-five women said that they took the Pill or used another form of hormonal birth control after becoming sexually-active; 37% of women said the reverse was true.

- Among 15-17 year olds on some type of hormonal birth control, Pill or otherwise, prevention came first. For all other age cohorts the reverse was true: majorities of women aged 18 and older said that they engaged in sexual activity and then decided to use a hormonal contraceptive.



- Majorities of Black (69%), Hispanic (66%), and White (56%) women said that they used hormonal contraceptives after becoming sexually-active. White women were much more likely to have used them prior to sexual activity than Black or Hispanic women (41% vs. 27% and 30%).
- **Majorities of women in all regions said that they first used hormonal contraceptives after becoming sexually-active.**
- Though majorities of both moms and non-moms who have used hormonal birth control said that they did so first after becoming sexually-active, women with children were more likely to say so than women without children (67% vs. 53%).
- Women who began using hormonal contraceptives before the age of 18 were divided: 48% said they did so before having sex, 47% said they did so after. For women who began taking it after the age of 18, sexual activity came first by a margin of 65%-32%.

Plurality of Women Relied on Themselves or Health Professionals (Tie) to Decide to Take the Pill; Parents More Involved than Friends or Siblings In Suggesting “Protection”

In today’s culture, there is no shortage of information about hormonal birth control, including contraceptives. From public service announcements to television advertisements by pharmaceutical companies to information distributed in public school classrooms, girls and young women are inundated with information about birth control.

So it comes as little surprise that more than one-third of women who currently use or have used hormonal forms of contraceptives said that they were the ones who suggested taking it (36%). Combined, doctors and nurses at various healthcare facilities accounted for 36% of recommendations, while parents were the source for 13% of women.

- “Protecting one’s children” takes on a new meaning, as among those respondents who were on birth control by ages 15-17, one-third (33%) said the suggestion came from a parent; that was three times higher the number who said they personally recommended it (11%). A doctor in a private clinic was the source for pluralities of 18-24 year old women (32%). Pluralities of women aged 25 and older who are on birth control said they made the proposal.
- Twenty-one percent of women (of any current age) who began taking hormonal birth control before the age of 18 did so at the suggestion of a parent, compared to 8% who began doing so after the age of 18.
- Hispanic women who said they were on birth control were twice as likely as White or Black women to say that they received a recommendation from a doctor or nurse at a women’s health clinic (15% vs. 6% and 7%, respectively).
- Women who said that they began birth control and then became sexually active were twice as likely as those who acted in the opposite order to say that a doctor recommended hormonal contraceptives (38% vs. 19%).

(ASKED ONLY THOSE WHO CURRENTLY TAKE THE PILL OR HAVE TAKEN IT IN THE PAST AND/OR WHO CURRENTLY USE HORMONAL BIRTH CONTROL OR HAVE USED IT IN THE PAST, N=645)

***Who first made the suggestion that you take oral contraceptives (including “the Pill”) or use another form of hormonal birth control?
(RANDOMIZED LIST)***

36%	MYSELF
26%	A DOCTOR OR NURSE AT A PRIVATE OFFICE
13%	A PARENT
8%	A DOCTOR OR NURSE AT A WOMEN’S HEALTH CLINIC
6%	A FRIEND
4%	A SEXUAL PARTNER
2%	A DOCTOR OR NURSE AT A COLLEGE CAMPUS CLINIC
1%	A SIBLING
*	A SCHOOL NURSE IN HIGH SCHOOL
3%	NO ONE
1%	OTHER
1%	DO NOT KNOW
*	REFUSE TO ANSWER

Physicians Provide First Access to Hormonal Birth Control; But One-Third Received Contraceptives Elsewhere

Nearly two-in-three women (65%) said that they first began taking birth control after receiving it from a physician while another one-quarter (24%) received it from a women’s health clinic.

- **With the exception of 15-17 year olds, majorities of women of all ages, races, regions, educational attainments, marital and parental statuses, religions, and religiosities said that they first received hormonal birth control from a physician. A plurality of 15-17 year olds cited this as their source.** Ten percent of women aged 15-17 said a friend provided hormonal birth control, compared to 2% overall.

(ASKED ONLY THOSE WHO CURRENTLY TAKE THE PILL OR HAVE TAKEN IT IN THE PAST AND/OR WHO CURRENTLY USE HORMONAL BIRTH CONTROL OR HAVE USED IT IN THE PAST, N=645)

Which of the following best describes how you first began taking oral contraceptives (including “the Pill”) or another form of hormonal birth control? (RANDOMIZED LIST)

65%	FROM A PHYSICIAN
24%	AT A WOMEN’S HEALTH CLINIC
7%	FROM A COLLEGE CAMPUS HEALTH CENTER
2%	FROM A FRIEND
1%	FROM A SCHOOL NURSE
2%	OTHER
1%	DO NOT KNOW/CANNOT REMEMBER
-	REFUSE TO ANSWER

- Cohorts notably more likely than the average to say that they received birth control from a women’s health clinic included African-American women (33%), women who began taking contraceptives before the age of 18 (31%), and women who began taking birth control *after* becoming sexually active (30%).

Women Place Pals and Parents at Parity in Consultation on Birth Control

More than three-in-ten women said they turned to a friend (32%) or a parent (31%) before taking hormonal contraceptives. Close to one-quarter said they sought the advice of a sexual partner. Nearly three-in-ten (29%) said they spoke with no one besides their healthcare provider.

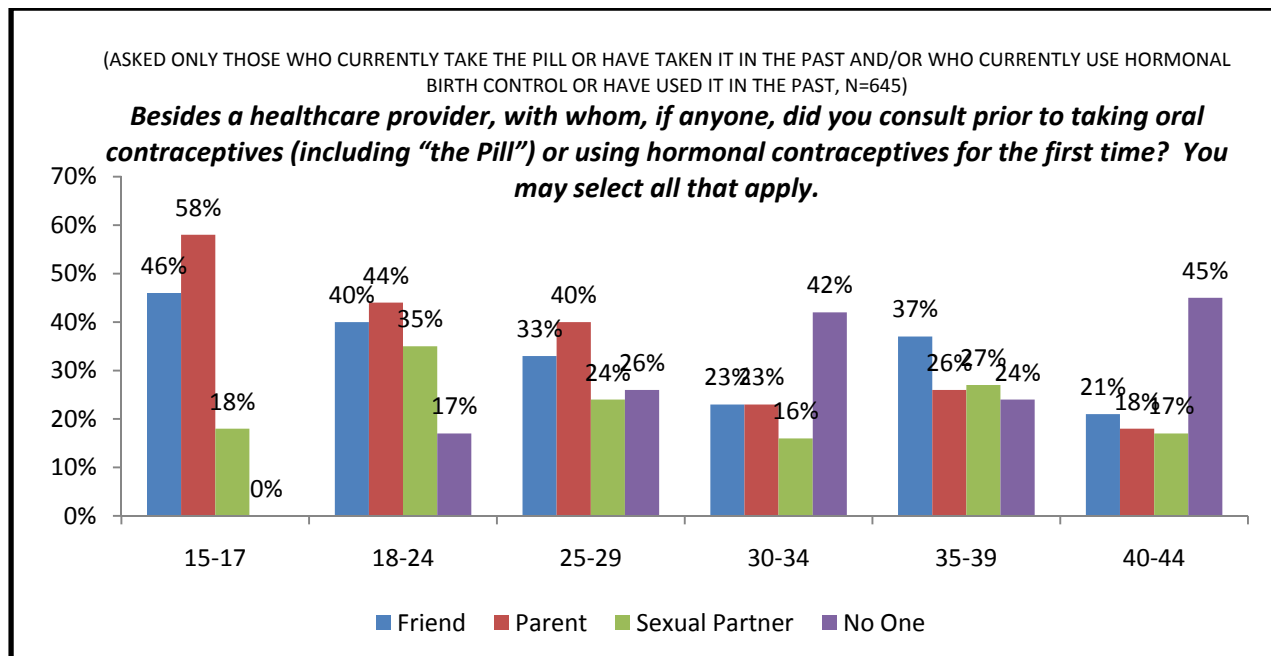
<i>Cohorts More Likely Than Most to Say They Turned To...</i>	
<p>A Friend (32%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women who took the Pill/hormonal birth control after becoming sexually active (35%). 	<p>No One (29%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Women who took the Pill after 18 (35%)
<p>A Sexual Partner (24%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single Women in Relationships (31%) Childless Women (27%) Religiously-Unaffiliated (35%) Women who took the Pill after 18 (27%) 	<p>A Parent (31%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> White Women (34%) Women without College Degrees (41%) Single Women in Relationships (40%) Childless Women (36%) Single Moms (37%) Women Who Took the Pill <18 Yrs (48%)

(ASKED ONLY THOSE WHO CURRENTLY TAKE THE PILL OR HAVE TAKEN IT IN THE PAST AND/OR WHO CURRENTLY USE HORMONAL BIRTH CONTROL OR HAVE USED IT IN THE PAST, N=645)

Besides a healthcare provider, with whom, if anyone, did you consult prior to taking oral contraceptives (including "the Pill") or using hormonal contraceptives for the first time? You may select all that apply. (RANDOMIZED LIST)

- 32% A FRIEND
- 31% A PARENT
- 24% A SEXUAL PARTNER
- 1% A RELIGIOUS ADVISOR
- 4% SOMEONE ELSE/OTHER
- 29% NO ONE
- 2% DO NOT KNOW/CANNOT REMEMBER
- 1% REFUSE TO ANSWER

As the graph below illustrates, younger women relied more heavily on the consultation of others than older women. The youngest women, especially, turned to moms and friends.



Majority of Women Not Warned of Pill's Side Effects

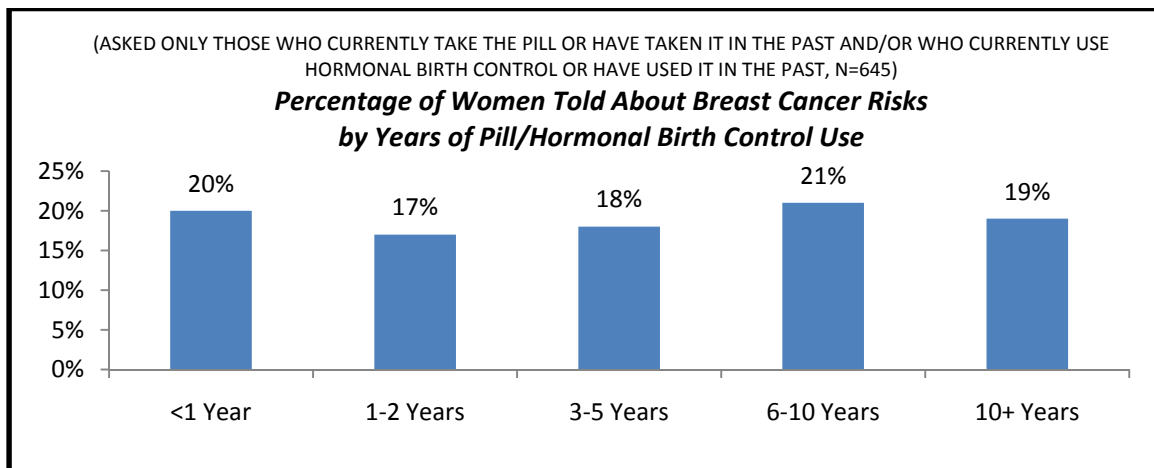
Given a list of six possible “consequences” of taking hormonal birth control and asked to select **all** that were described to them by their healthcare provider when given the prescription for it, not a single one triggered majority-recognition. In fact, the top response was weight gain (49%), coming ahead of more serious concerns like blood clots (40%) or increased risks of cancers (19%). While one-in-ten said no effects were mentioned, one-in-five (24%) could not recall.

(ASKED ONLY THOSE WHO CURRENTLY TAKE THE PILL OR HAVE TAKEN IT IN THE PAST AND/OR WHO CURRENTLY USE HORMONAL BIRTH CONTROL OR HAVE USED IT IN THE PAST, N=645)

When you took oral contraceptives (including “the Pill”) or used hormonal contraceptives for the first time, did the doctor or nurse discuss any potential side effects with you? Please check all that apply. (RANDOMIZED LIST)

49%	WEIGHT GAIN
40%	BLOOD CLOTS/STROKE
37%	MOOD SWINGS, EMOTIONAL CHANGES, OR EVEN DEPRESSION
23%	HEADACHES
19%	INCREASED RISK OF CANCERS, INCLUDING BREAST AND OVARIAN CANCERS
4%	PROMISCUITY
5%	OTHER
10%	NONE OF THE ABOVE
24%	DO NOT KNOW/CANNOT REMEMBER
*	REFUSE TO ANSWER

- Women who knew someone affected by breast cancer were no more likely than those who did not to have been told about the increased risk for breast and ovarian cancers (20% and 18%, respectively).
- A majority of women aged 18-24 were warned about mood swings and emotional changes, including the risk of depression (52%) or the potential for weight gain (53%), but only 24% were informed about augmented cancer threats.
- According to some research, long-term use of hormonal birth control increases the odds of having breast cancer. Notably, women who have been on the Pill or another form of hormonal birth control were no more aware of the breast cancer consequences than those who have been on it for shorter lengths of time:



Pregnancy Prevention Main Reason for Beginning – And Staying On – Hormonal Birth Control

Sixty-one percent of women who currently use hormonal birth control or who have used it in the past said that they initially did so in order to prevent pregnancy. Separately, among those who are still on it, contraception remains the top reason for doing so.

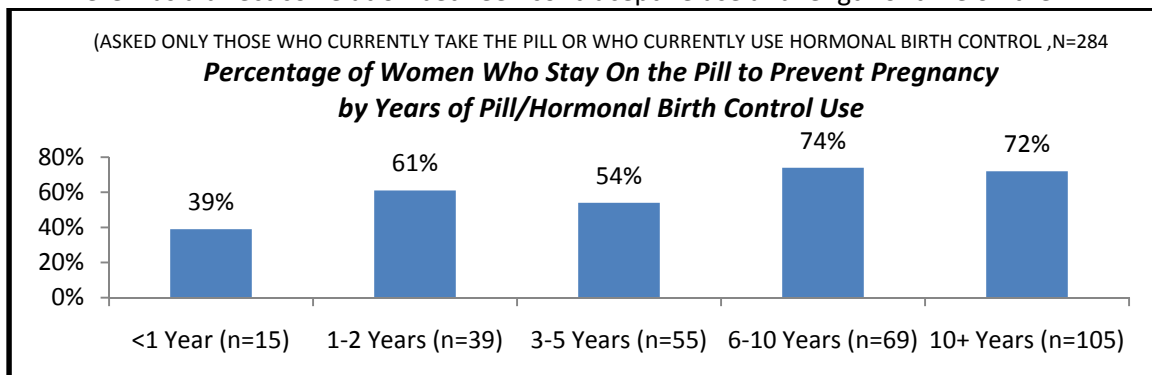
Which of the following was the main reason why you decided to take oral contraceptives (including “the Pill”) initially?		What is the main reason you continue to take oral contraceptives?	
All Women on the Pill – Past and Present (n=634)	Women Currently on the Pill (n=284)	Women Currently on the Pill (n=284)	
61%	57%	66%	Prevent Pregnancy
21%	21%	19%	Regulate Menstruation/Periods
8%	8%	3%	Alleviate Cramps/PMS Symptoms
4%	6%	3%	Treat Acne
3%	4%	4%	Just in Case
1%	1%	2%	Treat Mood Swings
n/a	n/a	1%	Just a Habit

Which of the following was the main reason why you decided to take oral contraceptives (including “the Pill”) initially?

- For women of all ages, races, regions, educational attainments, and marital statuses who have taken the Pill in the past or who currently do, pregnancy prevention was the top reason.
- Period regulation was more of a reason for women in their 20’s than younger or older women.
- Women who have been or were on the Pill for 10 years or more were just as likely as those who have been on it or were on it for a year or less to say that pregnancy prevention was their top reason (59% and 58%, respectively).

What is the main reason you continue to take oral contraceptives?

- Again, avoiding pregnancy was the main reason for taking the Pill across all demographic groups by age, race, region, educational attainment, marital and parental status, religion, and religiosity.
- There was a direct correlation between contraceptive use and length of time on the Pill:



The remaining questions were asked all women surveyed.

Peeling Back Women's Perceptions of the Pill

All respondents were asked the next subset of questions, which examined the potential impacts for women choosing to take the Pill. While the **prevailing notion was that women who use hormonal birth control engaged in similar levels of sexual activity as their non-hormonal contraception using counterparts**, almost one-quarter of women felt that those electing to use birth control were **more** sexually active than women who abstained. Nearly three-in-five women (59%) were inclined to believe that those using hormonal contraception in the form of the Pill were “as sexually active” than those electing not to use the pill. However, **respondents were three times as likely to feel women who use birth control were “more sexually active” (23%) than “less sexually active” (3%).**

When you think about women who take hormonal contraceptives, do you generally believe that they are more sexually-active, less sexually-active, or as sexually-active as women who do not take oral contraceptives?

59%	AS SEXUALLY ACTIVE
23%	MORE SEXUALLY ACTIVE
3%	LESS SEXUALLY ACTIVE
13%	DO NOT KNOW
2%	REFUSED TO ANSWER

- Younger women were most inclined to see a linkage between use of hormonal contraceptives and increased sexual activity, as 37% of 15-17 year olds and 30% of 18-24 year olds felt that women taking hormonal contraception were “more sexually active” than women who did not.
- College graduates (64%) and women with post-graduate degrees (66%) were among the groups most likely to feel that there was no difference in sexual activity depending on whether a women used hormonal birth control or not.
- Thirty-eight percent of women who had never taken or used hormonal birth control identified women that did not take the pill as “more sexually active” while only 21% of those on the Pill shared that perspective.

In a follow-up question, women overwhelmingly dismissed the idea that hormonal contraception prevented the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, as 93% asserted this was not the case while only 3% believed it to be true. While participants generally reflected a good understanding of sexual health, there were certain groups evidencing more uncertainty on the matter, **most notably the 15-17 year old age group, where 15% believed the pill would prevent STDs and only 57% were convinced otherwise.** This represented a substantial drop off from the other age brackets, where no less than 96% said the Pill was not designed to protect against STDs.

Two-in-Five Women More Deterred From Using the Pill Once Learning the Linkage to Breast Cancer

Forty-four percent of women were more hesitant to use the Pill upon discovering there was new evidence connecting its use to an increased risk for breast cancer.

This percentage was at parity with those who expressed no difference in their willingness to use the pill on account of the information. Overall, women were 41 points less likely than more likely to use the Pill once armed with this knowledge. The information relayed in the question had a clear impact on women’s willingness to pursue the pill, and a more detailed explanation of the evidence mentioned in the question could help sway more women who professed to be unaffected in response to the question.

- **Black (54% “less likely”) and Hispanic (50% “less likely”) women** were among the groups least inclined to take the Pill once hearing about the connection to breast cancer.
- Fifty-five percent of 35-39 year olds were less inclined to take the Pill in light of this information, the highest frequency among any age bracket, while 25-29 year olds were the least affected age group with 52% claiming that it made “no difference.”
- Women who **experienced breast cancer in a friend or family member were more likely to say that the link between breast cancer and hormonal contraceptives made them “less likely”** (46%) to use the Pill than those who did not have a personal connection to breast cancer (38% “less likely”).

There is new evidence to suggest that taking hormonal contraceptives may increase the risk of breast cancer. Does knowing this make you (ROTATED) more likely or less likely to take the Pill? Or, does it make no difference?

NET -41 LESS LIKELY

3% MORE LIKELY
44% LESS LIKELY

44% NO DIFFERENCE
8% DO NOT KNOW

“A 1996 [analysis](#) of worldwide epidemiologic data conducted by the Collaborative Group on Hormonal Factors in Breast Cancer found that women who were current or recent users of birth control pills had a slightly elevated risk of developing breast cancer. The risk was highest for women who started using OCs as teenagers.” [National Cancer Institute.](#)

“In a [National Cancer Institute](#) (NCI)-sponsored study published in 2003, researchers examined risk factors for breast cancer among women ages 20 to 34 compared with women ages 35 to 54. Women diagnosed with breast cancer were asked whether they had used OCs for more than 6 months before diagnosis and, if so, whether the most recent use had been within 5 years, 5 to 10 years, or more than 10 years. The results indicated that the risk was highest for women who used OCs within 5 years prior to diagnosis, particularly in the younger group.” [National Cancer Institute.](#)

If more research is conducted that shows that there is a link between hormonal contraceptives and increased risk of breast cancer, do you think that the risk is or is not worth the benefits of pregnancy prevention?

32%	TOTAL WORTH RISK OF PREGNANCY PREVENTION (NET)
6%	DEFINITELY WORTH THE RISK OF PREGNANCY PREVENTION
26%	PROBABLY WORTH THE RISK OF PREGNANCY PREVENTION
54%	TOTAL NOT WORTH RISK OF PREGNANCY PREVENTION (NET)
34%	PROBABLY NOT WORTH THE RISK OF PREGNANCY PREVENTION
20%	DEFINITELY NOT WORTH THE RISK OF PREGNANCY PREVENTION
13%	DO NOT KNOW
1%	REFUSED TO ANSWER

A 54%-majority of women said that the dangers associated with an increased risk for breast cancer outweighed the advantages of the Pill, provided that research reveals this to be the case. There was also a [14-point intensity gap](#) between those who said that using the Pill was **DEFINITELY** not worth the risk for the sake of preventing pregnancy (20%) and those feeling that hormonal contraception was **DEFINITELY** worth an increased risk for breast cancer (6%). **For a majority of women, the perceived benefits of the Pill hardly offset the dangers of facing an increased risk of breast cancer as a result.**

- Similar to in the previous question, Black (66% “not worth the risk”) and Hispanic women (69% “not worth the risk”) were among the subgroups least receptive to continued use of the Pill in light of the connection to breast cancer.
- **Nearly three-in-five married women (58%) felt that the Pill was not worth taking due to the possibility it could lead to an increased risk of breast cancer, a perspective shared by 53% of non-married women.**
- Those currently using the Pill were much more likely than those who had discontinued use of hormonal contraceptives to believe that pregnancy prevention was worth the increased risk of breast cancer (42% to 28%).
- Women who had intimate familiarity with breast cancer through a friend or relative (53%) and those without that connection to the disease (55%) had **statistically-similar levels of agreement** that continued use of the pill was “not worth the risk.”

the polling company™, inc./WomanTrend
on behalf of HLI America
Nationwide Online Survey of 808 Women Aged 15-44 Living in the United States
TOPLINE DATA

Field Dates: November 24-30, 2010

Screener Questions

A. Are you...(ROTATED)

100% FEMALE (CONTINUED)

B. How old were you on your last birthday?

10% 15-17
23% 18-24
15% 25-29
17% 30-34
16% 35-39
18% 40-44

C. To ensure that we have a representative sample, which of the following best describes your race?
(ROTATED. ACCEPTED ONLY ONE.)

66% WHITE OR CAUCASIAN
14% BLACK OR AFRICAN-AMERICAN
15% HISPANIC OR LATINO
3% ASIAN OR PACIFIC ISLANDER
1% NATIVE AMERICAN
* MIDDLE EASTERN
1% MULTI-RACIAL OR OTHER

D. In what state do you live? (CODED BY REGION)

19% NORTHEAST (NET)

5% NEW ENGLAND (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)
14% MIDDLE ATLANTIC (NJ, NY, PA)

22% MIDWEST (NET)

15% EAST NORTH CENTRAL (IN, IL, MI, OH, WI)
7% WEST NORTH CENTRAL (IA, KS, MN, MO, NE, ND, SD)

37% SOUTH (NET)

20% SOUTH ATLANTIC (DE, DC, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV)
6% EAST SOUTH CENTRAL (AL, KY, MS, TN)
11% WEST SOUTH CENTRAL (AR, LA, OK, TX)

22% WEST (NET)

7% MOUNTAIN (AZ, CO, ID, NM, MT, UT, NV, WY)
15% PACIFIC (AK, CA, HI, OR, WA)

CONTRACEPTIVE USE

DISPLAYED TO RESPONDENTS THROUGHOUT THE SURVEY - For the purposes of this survey, the term “hormonal contraceptives or birth control” includes oral contraceptives (sometimes called “the Pill”), intra-uterine devices (IUDs) or implants, contraceptive injections, contraceptive patches, or vaginal rings (like Nuva-Ring) that have hormones designed to prevent pregnancy.

(RANDOMIZED 1-3)

1. Do you think that hormonal contraceptives or birth control, including “the Pill,” have had a (ROTATED) positive or negative impact on American society? Or has the impact been neutral?

64% POSITIVE
19% NEUTRAL
9% NEGATIVE
7% DO NOT KNOW
1% REFUSE TO ANSWER

2. Do you think that hormonal contraceptives or birth control, including “the Pill,” have had a (ROTATED) positive or negative impact on marriages in the U.S.? Or, has the impact been neutral?

56% POSITIVE
29% NEUTRAL
6% NEGATIVE
8% DO NOT KNOW
1% REFUSE TO ANSWER

3. Do you think that hormonal contraceptives or birth control, including “the Pill,” have had a (ROTATED) positive or negative impact on the quality of relationships between men and women? Or, has the impact been neutral?

57% POSITIVE
26% NEUTRAL
8% NEGATIVE
7% DO NOT KNOW
1% REFUSE TO ANSWER

4. Do you currently, or have you ever, taken hormonal contraceptives or birth control, sometimes referred to as “the Pill?”

35% YES, CURRENTLY TAKE IT
43% YES, I HAVE TAKEN IT IN THE PAST BUT NO LONGER DO
19% NO, I HAVE NEVER TAKEN IT
1% DO NOT KNOW
2% REFUSE TO ANSWER

5. Do you currently, or have you ever, used another form of hormonal birth control, including intra-uterine devices (IUDs), contraceptive injections, contraceptive patches, or vaginal rings?

- 11% YES, CURRENTLY USE
- 19% YES, IN THE PAST BUT NO LONGER DO
- 67% NO, HAVE NEVER
- 1% DO NOT KNOW
- 1% REFUSE TO ANSWER

(ASKED 6-14 ONLY THOSE WHO CURRENTLY TAKE THE PILL OR HAVE TAKEN IT IN THE PAST AND/OR WHO CURRENTLY USE HORMONAL BIRTH CONTROL OR HAVE USED IT IN THE PAST, N=645)

6. How old were you when you first took oral contraceptives (including “the Pill”) or used another form of hormonal birth control?

- 4% 14 OR YOUNGER
- 7% 15
- 11% 16
- 12% 17
- 19% 18
- 11% 19
- 9% 20
- 8% 21
- 5% 22
- 4% 23
- 1% 24
- 2% 25
- 4% 26-29
- 1% 30-34
- 1% 35-39
- 40-44
- 2% DO NOT KNOW/CANNOT REMEMBER
- * REFUSE TO ANSWER

7. How long have you been taking or did you take oral contraceptives (including “the Pill”) or using or use another form of hormonal birth control?

- 10% LESS THAN A YEAR
- 16% 1-2 YEARS
- 20% 3-5 YEARS
- 24% 6-10 YEARS
- 28% 10 OR MORE YEARS
- 1% DO NOT KNOW/CANNOT REMEMBER
- REFUSE TO ANSWER

8. Did you first use oral contraceptives (including “the Pill”) or use another form of hormonal birth control before or after becoming sexually active?

- 59% AFTER
- 37% BEFORE
- 3% DO NOT KNOW/CANNOT REMEMBER
- 1% REFUSE TO ANSWER

9. Who first made the suggestion that you take oral contraceptives (including “the Pill”) or use another form of hormonal birth control? (RANDOMIZED LIST)

- 36% MYSELF
- 26% A DOCTOR OR NURSE AT A PRIVATE OFFICE
- 13% A PARENT
- 8% A DOCTOR OR NURSE AT A WOMEN’S HEALTH CLINIC
- 6% A FRIEND
- 4% A SEXUAL PARTNER
- 2% A DOCTOR OR NURSE AT A COLLEGE CAMPUS CLINIC
- 1% A SIBLING
- * A SCHOOL NURSE IN HIGH SCHOOL
- 3% NO ONE
- 1% OTHER
- 1% DO NOT KNOW
- * REFUSE TO ANSWER

10. Which of the following best describes how you first began taking oral contraceptives (including “the Pill”) or another form of hormonal birth control? (RANDOMIZED LIST)

- 65% FROM A PHYSICIAN
- 24% AT A WOMEN’S HEALTH CLINIC
- 7% FROM A COLLEGE CAMPUS HEALTH CENTER
- 2% FROM A FRIEND
- 1% FROM A SCHOOL NURSE
- 2% OTHER
- 1% DO NOT KNOW/CANNOT REMEMBER
- REFUSE TO ANSWER

11. Besides a healthcare provider, with whom, if anyone, did you consult prior to taking oral contraceptives (including “the Pill”) or using hormonal contraceptives for the first time? You may select all that apply. (RANDOMIZED LIST)

- 32% A FRIEND
- 31% A PARENT
- 24% A SEXUAL PARTNER
- 1% A RELIGIOUS ADVISOR
- 4% SOMEONE ELSE/OTHER
- 29% NO ONE
- 2% DO NOT KNOW/CANNOT REMEMBER
- 1% REFUSE TO ANSWER

12. When you took oral contraceptives (including “the Pill”) or used hormonal contraceptives for the first time, did the doctor or nurse discuss any potential side effects with you? Please check all that apply. (RANDOMIZED LIST)

- 49% WEIGHT GAIN
- 40% BLOOD CLOTS/STROKE
- 37% MOOD SWINGS, EMOTIONAL CHANGES, OR EVEN DEPRESSION
- 23% HEADACHES
- 19% INCREASED RISK OF CANCERS, INCLUDING BREAST OVARIAN CANCERS
- 4% PROMISCUITY
- 5% OTHER
- 10% NONE OF THE ABOVE
- 24% DO NOT KNOW/CANNOT REMEMBER
- * REFUSE TO ANSWER

13. (ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO SAID THEY CURRENTLY TAKE ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES OR WHO HAVE TAKEN IT IN THE PAST 4:1,2, N=634) Which of the following was the **main reason** why you decided to take oral contraceptives (including “the Pill”) initially? (RANDOMIZED LIST)

- 61% PREVENT PREGNANCY
- 21% REGULATE MENSTRUATION/PERIODS
- 8% ALLEVIATE CRAMPS/PMS SYMPTOMS
- 4% TREAT ACNE
- 3% JUST IN CASE
- 1% TREAT MOOD SWINGS
- 2% NONE OF THE ABOVE
- * DO NOT KNOW/CANNOT REMEMBER
- REFUSE TO ANSWER

14. (ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO SAID THEY CURRENTLY TAKE ORAL CONTRACEPTIVES 4:1, N=284) What is the **main reason** you continue to take oral contraceptives? (RANDOMIZED LIST)

- 66% PREVENT PREGNANCY
- 19% REGULATE MENSTRUATION/PERIODS
- 3% ALLEVIATE CRAMPS/PMS SYMPTOMS
- 3% TREAT ACNE
- 2% TREAT MOOD SWINGS
- 4% JUST IN CASE
- 1% IT IS JUST A HABIT
- 1% NONE OF THE ABOVE
- DO NOT KNOW/CANNOT REMEMBER
- * REFUSE TO ANSWER

(RESUMED ASKING OF ALL)

15. When you think about women who take hormonal contraceptives, do you generally believe that they are more sexually-active, less sexually-active, or as sexually-active as women who do not take oral contraceptives?

59% AS SEXUALLY ACTIVE
23% MORE SEXUALLY ACTIVE
3% LESS SEXUALLY ACTIVE
13% DO NOT KNOW
2% REFUSE TO ANSWER

16. To the best of your knowledge, does use of hormonal contraceptives prevent the transmission of sexually-transmitted diseases?

3% YES
93% NO
4% DO NOT KNOW
* REFUSE TO ANSWER

17. There is new evidence to suggest that taking hormonal contraceptives may increase the risk of breast cancer. Does knowing this make you (ROTATED) more likely or less likely to take the Pill? Or, does it make no difference?

3% MORE LIKELY
44% LESS LIKELY
44% NO DIFFERENCE
8% DO NOT KNOW
1% REFUSE TO ANSWER

18. If more research is conducted that shows that there is a link between hormonal contraceptives and increased risk of breast cancer, do you think that the risk is or is not worth the benefits of pregnancy prevention?

32% TOTAL WORTH RISK OF PREGNANCY PREVENTION (NET)
6% DEFINITELY WORTH THE RISK OF PREGNANCY PREVENTION
26% PROBABLY WORTH THE RISK OF PREGNANCY PREVENTION

54% TOTAL NOT WORTH RISK OF PREGNANCY PREVENTION (NET)
34% PROBABLY NOT WORTH THE RISK OF PREGNANCY PREVENTION
20% DEFINITELY NOT WORTH THE RISK OF PREGNANCY PREVENTION

13% DO NOT KNOW
1% REFUSE TO ANSWER

DEMOGRAPHICS

Finally, a few confidential statistical questions for classification purposes only....

19. Do you know anyone who has been diagnosed with breast cancer?

69% TOTAL YES, KNOW SOMEONE (NET)

35% YES, FRIEND
16% YES, COLLEAGUE
15% YES, GRANDMOTHER
15% YES, AUNT
15% YES, OTHER FAMILY MEMBER
5% YES, MOTHER
4% YES, COUSIN
1% YES, SISTER
1% YES, SELF

24% NONE OF THE ABOVE

7% DO NOT KNOW
1% REFUSE TO ANSWER

20. What is the last grade of formal education you have completed?

5% LESS THAN HIGH SCHOOL
8% HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE
25% SOME COLLEGE/VOCATIONAL SCHOOL
39% COLLEGE GRADUATE
21% POST GRADUATE
4% REFUSE TO ANSWER

21. Which of the following best describes you

27% SINGLE, NEVER MARRIED AND NOT IN A LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP
26% SINGLE, NEVER MARRIED, BUT IN A LONG-TERM RELATIONSHIP
38% MARRIED
1% SEPARATED
6% DIVORCED
* WIDOWED
1% REFUSE TO ANSWER

22. To how many children have you given birth?

65% ZERO/HAVE NOT GIVEN BIRTH

34% TOTAL GIVEN BIRTH (NET)

13% ONE
14% TWO
5% THREE
2% FOUR OR MORE

1% REFUSE TO ANSWER

23. Are you...?

25% CATHOLIC
31% PROTESTANT OR NON-CATHOLIC CHRISTIAN (ASK NEXT Q.)
6% AGNOSTIC/ATHEIST
2% JEWISH
1% MUSLIM
1% MORMON
13% OTHER
17% NONE/UNAFFILIATED
4% REFUSE TO ANSWER

24. (ASKED ONLY OF THOSE WHO ANSWERED "PROTESTANT" IN PREVIOUS Q., N=247)
And would you consider yourself born-again or Evangelical?

44% YES
52% NO
4% REFUSE TO ANSWER

25. How often do you attend religious services?

* EVERY DAY
7% A FEW TIMES PER WEEK
17% ONCE A WEEK
11% A FEW TIMES PER MONTH
22% A FEW TIMES PER YEAR
39% SELDOM/NEVER
3% REFUSE TO ANSWER