

ATTENTION:

Although sex is a common theme among teenagers, *The Electron* senses some students may not have the facts straight. We recognize that there are sexually active teens, and while we are not encouraging the behavior, we are emphasizing that those who make these choices must make them responsibly and with ample knowledge.

Below are various birth control facts, tips and also myths concerning sex.

The Pill and EC

The Pill

- Must be taken at same time each day for best results
- Normally three weeks of hormones and then a week of a placebo (sugar pills) to allow a period
- Possible side effects:
 - Nausea
 - Bleeding between periods
 - Breast tenderness

Two types

- Combination pills, which contains estrogen and progestin
- Progestin-only
 - Both are made of hormones, similar to the ones made by a woman's ovaries, that trick the body into thinking it is pregnant. This prevents the ovaries from releasing eggs.

The EC Pill

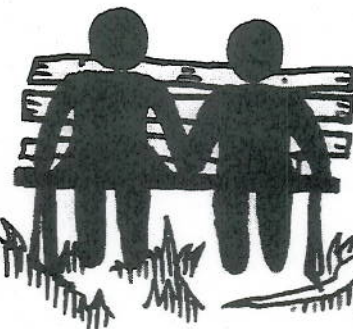
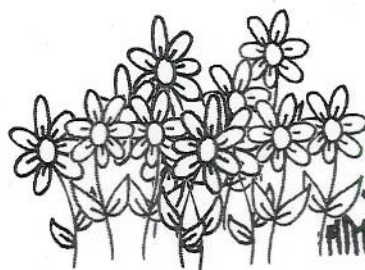
- Emergency Contraceptive; The morning after pill; Plan B, 72 Hour Pill
- The sooner you take it the better
- High dosage of birth control
- 95% effective within 24 hours of unprotected sex
- 85% effective within 24-48 hours
- Period may come earlier or later
- "Spotting" following period
- May cause nausea
- Ovulation is inhibited, meaning the egg will not be released
- The normal menstrual cycle is altered, delaying ovulation
- It can irritate the lining of the uterus so that if the woman does become pregnant, the embryo created will die before it can actually attach to the lining of the uterus.
- "Chemical Abortion"

Condom Tips

- Read the instructions before use.
- Do not reuse a condom.
- Anyone can buy condoms, age does not matter.
- Using teeth or nails to open the package increases breakage.
- Check condom for breakage after sex.
- Do not flush condoms.
- Store condoms in a cool, dry place.
- Keep condoms in a wallet for only a short time if necessary.
- Look for an expiration date.

Myths

- If a guy "pulls out" before he ejaculates, the girl will not get pregnant.
 - **FALSE:** Before he ejaculates, he can release semen which can contain enough sperm to impregnate a female.
- Two condoms will be better than one.
 - **FALSE:** Two condoms will create friction which increases the chances of condom breakage.
- If the girl is on top during sex, she will not get pregnant.
 - **FALSE:** Once in the body, sperm travels in all directions, even up, making pregnancy possible.



Cancer causing STD

HPV found in half of sexually active people sometime during life

Text: Kristy Peters

Men and women who are sexually active can become infected with sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), which include HPV. HPV, or the human papilloma virus, causes cervical cancer and other symptoms.

According to Merck.com, cervical cancer is in the lower part of the uterus that connects to the vagina.

Although the overall rate of sexually active teens decreased after 1997, genital infections are increasing. Sexually transmitted diseases infect approximately one fourth of the nation's sexually active teens.

There are roughly 6 million new cases of genital HPV in the United States every year. Seventy-four percent of them occur in 15 to 24 year olds.

In 2004, the American Cancer Society estimated that because of HPV, 10,520 women would develop invasive cervical cancer and 3,900 women would die from this disease.

Low risk types of HPV cause warts, while high risk HPV causes cervical cancer.

"The virus is microscopic," registered nurse Mary Gonzales said. "Unfortunately, you may not know you are carrying it. A pap test biopsy can check to see if you have it."

"Low Risk" genital warts are pink or flesh colored growths. They are large or small soft bumps sometimes in clusters. "High Risk" symptoms of the cervical cancer are abnormal vaginal bleeding, bleeding after sexual intercourse, unusual vaginal discharge and pelvic pain.

"What we see now [in the doctors office] is people with abnormal pap tests," Gonzales said. "It's [HPV] out

there so much, you just can't tell if you have it. Men can carry the wart virus just as much as women can, but it is more readily apparent in women."

An abnormal pap test consists of cells inside the cervix showing abnormal traits. Abnormalities may be in one area of the cervix, but the more severe abnormalities may be in a deeper layer.

"To help prevent HPV, use a condom and get the vaccination," Gonzales said. "The vaccination does not stop cancer. It prevents spurts of the virus. Most cervical cancer can be treated, though."

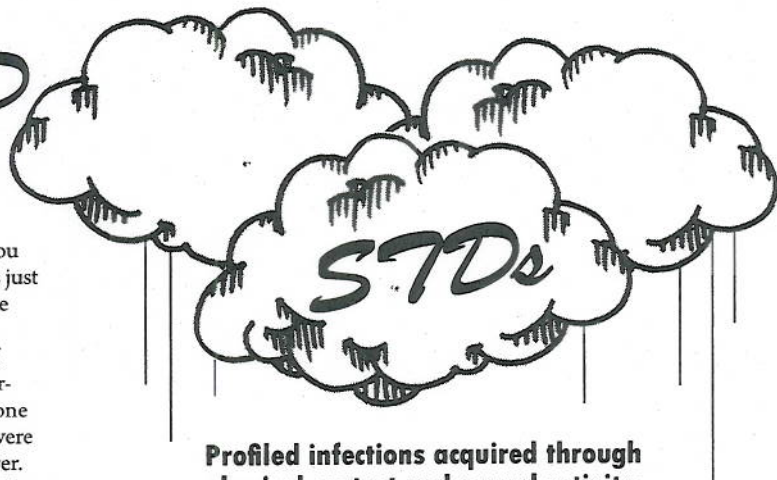
Gardasil is an HPV vaccination. It is only effective if the person has HPV types six, 11, 16 or 18. Gardasil can help prevent the virus in these types.

According to Merck.com, "HPV types [high risk] 16 and 18 cause 70 percent of cervical cancer cases, and HPV types [low risk] six and 11 cause 90 percent of genital warts cases."

"The vaccination is given in three stages," Gonzales said. "The first vaccination you can get whenever. You get the second two months later. The last you get six months [after your first shot]."

Gardasil is available to women ages nine to 26. It is highly recommended to receive the vaccination from a gynecologist.

"If you are 18 years old or sexually active, then you are wide open for anything [STDs]," Gonzales said. "It is not just your partner you need to worry about [having the virus], but all the partners you or your partner have had in the past. The vaccine gives as much protection as possible, but that doesn't mean don't use a condom. Even with the virus, you can only prevent what you see."



Profiled infections acquired through physical contact and sexual activity

-Chlamydia (The Clap)

- Bacteria causing sterility in men and women
- Symptoms can include pain while urinating, excessive vaginal bleeding, abdominal pain nausea, fevers, swelling in testicles
- Spread through intercourse, from birth canal to fetus
- 3 million people in America infected each year
- Many cases have no symptoms

-Syphilis

- If untreated, lead to neurological disorders, disfigurement, and death
- 70,000 new cases each year in the United States
- Usually there are no symptoms
- If there are, they include:
 - sores on the vagina, lips, mouth, anus
 - rashes on the palms of the hands and soles of the feet, mild fever, fatigue, sore throat

-Pubic Lice (crabs)

- Tiny insects
- Lice or small egg sacks in hair
- Spread through linens and sexual contact
- Treatment with over the counter medication
- Symptoms include: Intense itching of the pubic region, mild fever, small egg sacks



Artwork: Bart Leonard
Facts, tips, myths: Anna Schwartz, Jessica Buchanan