Birth Control Basics

A Lesson Plan from Rights, Respect, Responsibility: A K-12 Curriculum

Fostering respect and responsibility through age-appropriate sexuality education.

TARGET GRADE: 7 and 8

TIME: 50 Minutes

MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Index cards – one per student
- One set of the seven method cards for students' use
- One set of the seven method cards with two additional copies of the "Dual Use" card for use by teacher
- One set of the three category cards
- Newsprint – one piece, posted at the front of the room
- Markers
- Masking tape
- Optional – a birth control kit with the above methods to show students (Note: Many Planned Parenthoods sell birth control kits as does Total Access Group here http://www.totalaccessgroup.com/contraceptive_demonstration_educator_kit.htm)
- Homework – Birth Control Basics – one per student

ADVANCE PREPARATION FOR LESSON:

- Print one set of the three category cards with one each of the following per page:
  - Protects for a Few Years (Long-Acting Methods)
  - Protects for a Month (Short-Acting Methods)
  - Protects right now
- Seven method cards copied double-sided so that the method is on one side and the three statements are on the other side – two sets needed as noted in the materials section
  - abstinence
  - external condoms
  - internal condoms
  - pills/patch/ring
  - IUDs/shot/implant
  - withdrawal
  - emergency contraception
  - dual use

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

1. Describe the impact of correct and consistent use of a birth control method on how effective it is at preventing pregnancy. [Knowledge]
2. Correctly recall that there is generally a gap between when a person may start to have vaginal sex and when they may wish to get pregnant, which makes using effective birth control important. [Knowledge]
3. State correctly what emergency contraception is. [Knowledge]

A NOTE ABOUT LANGUAGE:

Language is really important and we've intentionally been very careful about our language throughout this curriculum. You may notice language throughout the curriculum that seems less familiar - using the pronoun "they" instead of "her" or "him", using gender neutral names in scenarios and role-plays and referring to "someone with a vulva" vs. a girl or woman.

This is intended to make the curriculum inclusive of all genders and gender identities. You will need to determine for yourself how much and how often you can do this in your own school and classroom, and should make adjustments accordingly.

PROCEDURE:

STEP 1: Introduce the topic by explaining that birth control, sometimes called contraception, is a way to prevent a pregnancy if a different sex couple has vaginal sex. There are many different kinds of birth control that work by preventing the sperm and egg from joining in a variety of ways, if they are used consistently and correctly. This means the method is used every time the way it was intended. *(2 minutes)*

STEP 2: On the left end of the board draw a horizontal line running all the way to the other end of the board.

Note to the Teacher: *You're creating a timeline. On the left end write the typical age of your 8th graders, likely 13 or 14.*

Explain to students that this lesson will look a bit at their future through the end of middle school, over the summer and into high school.

Ask students to raise their hands if they think they may want to have children or become parents someday. Acknowledge that some might and some might not and either is fine. Ask students what someone would need to do in order to be ready to have a child. As students brainstorm responses, write them on the newsprint posted near the timeline you have created. Students will likely suggest things like have money, have a job, have a place to live, etc. Ask students, "Based on all the things on this list, what is the best age to have children, knowing that people's personal experiences can vary a lot?" (As students call out answers, write them under the timeline with a tick mark indicating where they fall. Students might give answers ranging from late teen years to early adulthood.) Summarize by saying, "Okay, now that we know what someone who wants children has to do to get ready by ages (insert ages they gave you), let's look at what they can do to reach those goals." *(5 minutes)*

STEP 3: Draw a stick figure above the timeline all the way to the left side. Introduce the stick figure you have drawn by stating they are currently an 8th grader like you. Say, "The stick figure wants to have children someday, but not any time soon. They are trying to decide if they should have vaginal sex or not. Let's imagine that they wait until they are older—maybe 16 before they have vaginal sex."

Note to the Teacher: *Write the age of 16 on the timeline above where the stick figure is.*

Say, "And this person also agrees with what we've brainstormed about what they need to do in order to be the best parent they can be. So maybe they want to wait until they are out of high school before they have children. Generally someone is done with high school at age 18."

Note to the Teacher: *Write the age 18 on the timeline a few inches down from where you wrote age 16.*

Say, "So once this 8th grader is done with high school, have they done everything on this list we created?

Note to the Teacher: *Generally the answer is "no" but allow students to respond authentically here since some may be children of young parents.*

So, let's say this person wants to wait a few more years after high school to have children, maybe until they're 21 years-old."

Note to the Teacher: *Write the age 21 on the timeline a few inches down from age 18.*

Say, "Now let's do some simple math. If this stick figure decides to have vaginal sex while they are age 16 but doesn't want to have children until age 21, how many years do they need to protect themselves from starting a pregnancy?"

Note to the Teacher: *The answer should be 5 years.*

Say, "We know the most effective way for this stick figure to absolutely make sure that they don't start a pregnancy is by delaying having vaginal sex, until they are older. So let's imagine that our stick figure is able to do that. Maybe they show their affection for people they are dating in other ways, but they do not have vaginal sex until age 17.

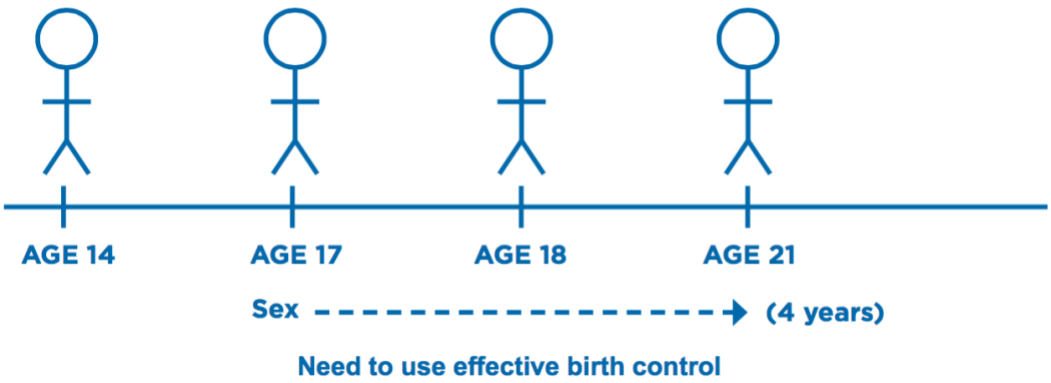
Note to the Teacher: *Write the word "sex" under the age 17 on your timeline.*

Now, between age 17, when they decide to have vaginal sex, until age 21, when they think they want to start having children, how many years is in between there?"

Note to the Teacher: *The answer is 4 years so draw an arrow under the timeline from age 17 to 21 and the words 'need to use effective birth control'.*

Say "So we have narrowed the gap a bit by waiting from 5 to 4 years But, four years is still a really long time! So this stick figure, if they decide to have vaginal sex will need to use effective birth control during that time period to make sure they don't start a pregnancy until they want to. And keep in mind that we're only talking about pregnancy today, but they will also need to protect themselves from STDs too."

Note to the Teacher: *At the end, this is what your timeline should look like.* *(5 minutes)*



STEP 4: Explain by saying, "There are many methods of birth control available to people who want to wait to have children until later in life or who may never want to have children." Introduce the three categories and tape each category to the board to form three columns as you talk. Say, "All of these methods work a little differently but some protect right now, some protect for a short time, like one month, and some protect for a long-time, sometimes even a few years." Review the following 7 methods of birth control

one at a time by showing the card with name of the method on it, stating the information about the method below and then tape the method card in the correct column you have already created.

"Abstaining from vaginal sex is the only 100% effective way to prevent pregnancy when done consistently and correctly. In fact, it is the method used by most 8th graders. Ask students what you mean by "when done consistently and correctly." Affirm or correct their statements until you feel satisfied that that they understand that abstinence only works when people use it every time. This means a penis not going inside another person's vagina. Tell them that most people are not abstinent forever but choosing to delay having sex until you are a bit older can be a very healthy choice." [Place in the "protects right now" category.]

"External condoms (sometimes called male condoms) are worn on a penis. Anyone can buy them at the store (including 8th graders) and they are very effective at preventing pregnancy when used consistently (meaning every time a couple has vaginal sex) and correctly. They also have the added bonus of protecting against most sexually transmitted diseases or STDs." [Place in the "protects right now" category.]

"Similarly to an external condom, there is also an "Internal Condom" (sometimes called female condom). An internal condom is a soft, loose, pouch that's inserted into the vagina or anus before sex and is effective at preventing pregnancy and STIs. Internal condoms may be a bit harder to find, although many health clinics have them." [Place in the "protects right now" category]

Note to the Teacher: *You will notice that we use the phrases "external" condom. Explain that, while students may be familiar with the terms "male" condom, you are using these terms to reflect how the methods are used, rather than to assign a gender to them.*

"The birth control pill, the patch and the ring all contain hormones that are very effective at preventing pregnancy. The patch and the ring work for a month at a time and then have to be replaced. The patch you replace once a week and the ring you replace once a month. The pill needs to be taken once a day, at the same time every day. A pack of pills lasts one month and then you need to start the next pack. These are called short-acting methods that you can get from a clinic." [Place in the "short-acting- protects for a month" category.]

"Most IUDs, the shot and the implant contain hormones that are very effective at preventing pregnancy for anywhere between a few months (3 months for the shot) and many years (up to 10 for some IUDs). These are called long-acting methods that you can get from a clinic too." [Place in the "long-acting- protects for a few years" category.]

"Withdrawal, often called pulling out, is when a penis is removed from a vagina before sperm are ejaculated to prevent pregnancy and while it is not as effective as some other methods, it is definitely better than not using anything. It is not, however, the same thing as abstinence." [Place in the "protects right now" category.]

"Emergency contraception, often called Plan B, is medicine that is taken after unprotected vaginal sex to prevent pregnancy and the sooner it is taken after vaginal sex, the more effective it is." [Place in the "protects right now" category.]

"Dual use is when people who have vaginal sex want to get the most effective protection possible by using a condom in addition to another method (a condom and the pill, a

condom and the IUD). This doubles their protection and helps protect them against both unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases. But this does not apply to using two condoms at the same time, which should not be done, as that can cause the latex to break." [Place a dual use sign in all three categories to show that a wide variety of methods can be used together.] *(15 minutes)*

Note to the Teacher: *At the end, your board should look like this.*

STEP 5: Explain that the next activity will help students learn a bit more about the benefits of the various methods and how well they work when they are used correctly and consistently. Explain that the class will be playing a game called "Which One is Not True."

Protects Right Now	Protects for a Month (Short-Acting Methods)	Protects for a Few Years (Long-Acting Methods)
Abstinence	Pills/Patch/Ring	IUDs/Shot/Implant
External Condoms	Dual Use	Dual Use
Internal Condoms		
Withdrawal		
Emergency Contraception		

Select seven student volunteers and have them come to the front of the room.

Note to the Teacher: *Select students who you think would not be too embarrassed to participate and can handle the activity maturely.*

Give each of the seven volunteers one of the seven method cards and have them review the three statements on the back of the card to prepare to read them aloud to the class.

While volunteers are preparing, explain to the rest of the class that each of the seven students will be representing one of the methods of birth control that are on the board. The students will be sharing three statements about the method but only two will be true and one will be a lie. The class needs to decide which statement is the lie and be able to explain why it's a lie.

Once the seven students are ready, have them reveal which birth control method they are and read aloud the three statements. Ask the class to guess which statement is the lie and explain why it's a lie adding in accurate information as needed and correcting any misinformation that might come up. Continue playing until all seven methods have been shared. Once done, thank the volunteers and have students return to their seats.

Note to the Teacher: *You can turn this activity into a competitive game with teams and points if you think your students will respond well and you have the time and set-up that would allow this.* *(20 minutes)*

STEP 6: Close by returning to the stick figure. Say, "Now knowing more about birth control, what methods do you think would be effective for this person if they were to have vaginal sex right now? What about when they are in high school?" Take some ideas and make sure to reinforce that delaying vaginal sex is the most effective way to prevent pregnancy, and if anyone chooses to have vaginal sex and they are not ready for a possible pregnancy, that using two methods together (dual use) can be very effective. Assign homework and close the lesson. *(3 minutes)*

RECOMMENDED ASSESSMENT OF LEARNING OBJECTIVES AT CONCLUSION OF LESSON:

The Two Truths and a Lie activity will accomplish the first and third learning objective while the stick figure timeline discussion will accomplish the second learning objective.

HOMEWORK:

Distribute the worksheet, "Birth Control Basics" and have students return it during your next class session. Explain that it will involve them watching a short animated video and answering corresponding questions.

Homework: Birth Control Basics

Name: _____ Date: _____

Instructions: Watch the video, Birth Control Animation | The Contraceptinator available here, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypbxZQ8wEFY, and answer the following questions.

1) Why are Phoebe and Lee visited by the Contraceptinator and their future selves?

2) List two pieces of advice that Lee and Phoebe are given and explain why they are given it.

3) Now that Lee and Phoebe know how to prevent a pregnancy and STDs, what is your advice to them?

Abstinence

Statement 1) Abstinence, if used consistently and correctly, is 100% effective at preventing pregnancy.

Statement 2) Abstaining from vaginal, oral, and anal sex can also protect against STDs.

Statement 3) Abstinence never fails.
(NOT TRUE – Abstinence can fail if, for example, a person is under the influence of drugs or alcohol and doesn't stay abstinent.)

External Condom

Statement 1) External Condoms can help make sex last longer.

Statement 2) You must be 16 years old to purchase external condoms.
(NOT TRUE – Condoms can be legally bought from any store at any age. While they may be placed behind a counter, anyone of any age is legally allowed to but condoms in all 50 states.)

Statement 3) External Condoms are around 80% effective at preventing pregnancy, but this can go up to 98% effective when used correctly.

Internal Condom

Statement 1) Internal condoms can be placed inside a vagina or an anus.

Statement 2) An internal condom cannot be used with an external condom; it can cause both condoms to break.

Statement 3) Internal condoms don't protect against STIs. (NOT TRUE – Internal condoms do help prevent STIs.)

Pills/Patch/Ring

Statement 1) The pill, patch and ring can help reduce menstrual cramps and make menstrual periods shorter.

Statement 2) The pill, patch and ring, if used consistently and correctly, are each 99% effective at preventing pregnancy.

Statement 3) The pill, patch and ring, if used consistently and correctly, are also really effective at preventing STDs.
(NOT TRUE – The pill, patch and ring ONLY provide protection from pregnancy but do not provide any protection against STDs. So using a condom along with one of these methods will help increase the protection against pregnancy and protect against STDs.)

IUD/Shot/ Implant

Statement 1) You can get the IUD, shot and implant at pharmacies like Target, Walgreens or CVS.
(NOT TRUE – The IUD, shot and implant require a person to go to a health care provider.)

Statement 2) Many people who use the IUD, shot or implant experience much shorter and lighter menstrual periods.

Statement 3) The IUD, shot and implant, if used consistently and correctly, are 99% effective at preventing pregnancy.

Withdrawal

Statement 1) Withdrawal or pulling out, prevents most STDs.
(NOT TRUE – Since withdrawal does not prevent skin-to-skin touching or fluid exchange, if one person is infected with an STD it can still be passed to their partner even if they used withdrawal perfectly.)

Statement 2) Withdrawal is more effective at preventing pregnancy than doing nothing if someone has unprotected sex.

Statement 3) Pre-ejaculatory fluid (or “pre-cum”), which comes out of a penis when it is erect, may contain some sperm. Withdrawal cannot prevent this “pre-cum” from getting inside a vagina.

Emergency Contraception

Statement 1) Anyone of any age and gender can buy emergency contraception from a drugstore like Target, CVS, Rite Aid or Walgreens.

Statement 2) The sooner after unprotected vaginal sex a person takes emergency contraception, the more effective it is. It must be taken within five days after unprotected sex.

Statement 3) Emergency contraception works by forming a barrier in the fallopian tube which prevents sperm from passing through.
(NOT TRUE – Emergency contraception works mostly by telling the ovaries to not let any eggs out and sometimes by preventing the egg from being fertilized.)

Dual Use

Statement 1) Dual use generally means using a condom in addition to another method of birth control for STD and pregnancy prevention.

Statement 2) A person would need to get a doctor's permission before they used dual use with their partner.
(NOT TRUE – Dual use is something two people can decide on their own if they want to increase their protection.)

Statement 3) A person of any age is legally allowed to buy condoms at a drugstore like Target, CVS, Rite Aid or Walgreens.

Protects for a Few Years

(Long-Acting Methods)

Protects
For a Month
(Short-Acting Methods)

Protects Right Now