

First wave of pandemic kept many New Yorkers from obtaining needed contraception

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During the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, many Americans encountered delays to medical care, including sexual and reproductive

health services, prompting concerns over patients' ability to access contraception and maintain control over their reproductive lives.

To investigate factors associated with delays to obtaining [contraception](#) during the COVID-19 pandemic, CUNY SPH faculty Meredith Manze, Diana Romero, Glen Johnson, and doctoral student Sarah Pickering led a study published Friday in *Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare*.

For the primary study, the researchers conducted a cross-sectional, web-based survey among individuals in New York State examining experiences with pregnancy during the pandemic, compared to those who were pregnant prior to the pandemic. The current analysis restricted the sample to all those not pregnant at the time of the survey and who reported seeking contraception.

Nearly 40 percent of these respondents reported delays in obtaining contraception due to COVID-19. In adjusted analyses, those who missed a rent or mortgage payment during the pandemic, participated in a supplemental government program, and those who had COVID-19 or had a household member contract the virus were more likely to report delays to contraception. The most frequently reported delays were new prescriptions for the pill, patch, or ring.

Health care and [public health institutions](#) should prioritize ensuring access to contraception during pandemics and other crises, the researchers say. Potential solutions include offering and promoting telemedicine visits, allowing prescription refills for a full year, dispensing several months' supply at a time, and allowing for the provision of contraception from pharmacies or online companies. Reducing financial barriers that help individuals maintain their housing and living necessities is also imperative, they conclude.

"Given the considerable changes in pregnancy desires during the

[pandemic](#), access to contraception is vital," says Manze. "It is essential for individuals to be able to control their own fertility, particularly in light of increasing restrictions on access to abortion."

More information: Meredith Manze et al, Factors related to delays in obtaining contraception among pregnancy-capable adults in New York state during the COVID-19 pandemic: The CAP study, *Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare* (2022). [DOI: 10.1016/j.srhc.2022.100697](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.srhc.2022.100697)

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