

FDA mulling over-the-counter sale of contraceptive pill

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For decades, birth control pills in the United States have only been

available with a prescription, but an [application](#) filed Monday with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for an over-the-counter pill might change all that.

The latest effort to make birth control more accessible comes just weeks after the U.S. Supreme Court [overturned](#) *Roe v. Wade*, a landmark 1973 case that guaranteed a woman's right to abortion for nearly 50 years.

Applicant HRA Pharma already sells its pill (Opill) in the United States as a prescription-only drug. But it is not the only company looking to go over-the-counter with [birth control pills](#): Cadence Health is also in talks with the FDA to do the same and said it plans to submit an application in the coming year, *The New York Times* reported.

The timing of HRA Pharma's application is "a really sad coincidence," Frédérique Welgryn, the company's chief strategic and innovations officer, told the *Times*. "Birth control is not a solution for abortion access," she stressed.

In his concurring opinion on the recent Supreme Court ruling, Justice Clarence Thomas suggested that the 1965 decision which provided a right to contraception should also be overturned. Meanwhile, President Joe Biden issued an [executive order](#) on Friday to offer continued abortion access across the United States, in an effort to curb the impacts of the court's ruling.

Earlier this year, House Democrats signed a [letter](#) to FDA Commissioner Robert Califf requesting a "timely review" of applications to make birth control pills available over the counter (OTC), and over 100 Democrats have signed on to a bill to make [health insurance companies](#) cover the cost of OTC [birth control](#), the *Times* reported.

"As we are seeing the outfall and the chaos of the Supreme Court

decision, more families are looking to, 'Well, how can I make sure I control my own choices in life?'" Sen. Patty Murray, chairwoman of the Senate Health Committee and lead sponsor of the new bill, told the *Times*. "We want to make sure that women not only get access, but those who have trouble affording it get access as well."

HRA Pharma said it expects a decision from the FDA in the next 10 months, the typical waiting period for OTC applications.

More information: Visit the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for more on [birth control](#).

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