

Most U.S. women under 50 use contraception: Report

October 20 2020, by Steven Reinberg, Healthday Reporter



(HealthDay)—Most American women between 15 and 49 years of age

use birth control, according to a new U.S. government report.

Between 2017 and 2019, 65% of those [women](#) used some form of contraception, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

"This report provides this unique snapshot of all women of reproductive age at a point in time," said lead researcher Kimberly Daniels. She's a demographic statistician at the CDC's National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) in Hyattsville, Md.

The most common types of [birth](#) control were female sterilization (18%), [oral contraceptive pills](#) (14%), long-acting reversible contraception, or LARCs (10%), and male condoms (8%).

LARCs—which include intrauterine devices and under-the-skin implants—were most popular among women in their 20s and 30s. Among 20- to 29-year-olds, 14% used LARCs, as did 13% of women in their 30s. LARCS were the method of choice for 6% of 15- to 19-year-olds and 7% of women in their 40s, the findings showed.

Hispanic and Black women were more likely to rely on condoms (11%), compared with white women (7%), the researchers found.

And women with more education preferred contraceptive pills over sterilization, the study found.

"The less commonly used methods in terms of percentages would be natural family planning and diaphragms," Daniels said.

The last time Daniels looked at contraceptive use was 2018, and the most common methods are still the same. Understanding contraceptive use across populations sheds light on fertility patterns, including birth rates

and [unintended pregnancies](#), she said.

The report was published Oct. 20 in the CDC's *NCHS Data Brief*.

Dr. Jill Rabin, co-chief of ambulatory care and obstetrics and gynecology at Northwell Health in New Hyde Park, N.Y., reviewed the findings.

"Contraception is an [individual choice](#) which is dynamic and changes with people's lives and the desire for fertility or needing to protect against an unintended pregnancy," Rabin said.

Half of all pregnancies in the United States are unintended—but that doesn't mean "unwanted," Rabin said.

"A significant portion of people who are not using contraception are either seeking fertility or not actively seeking to become pregnant, but if they did become pregnant, they would be happy," she said.

Many people who don't use birth control are LGBTQ or don't have heterosexual sex, she added.

One of the main barriers for women who want [contraception](#) is cost, Rabin said. Whether a woman has health insurance or not can determine what type of birth control is available to her.

Condoms are cheap and readily available, but birth control pills and LARCs require a prescription and are costly, which limits their availability to many poor and uninsured women, Rabin said. "And abortion is not a method of birth control," she added.

While effective in preventing pregnancy, Rabin cautioned that contraceptives do not protect against sexually transmitted infections

(STIs).

"The STI rate is way too high. Even condoms are not 100% effective against sexually transmitted infections," she said.

More information: For more about birth control choices, visit the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

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