

ARTS AND FEATURES



DTH illustration/Jim Holm

Contraceptives requiring daily attention are challenged by development of long-term implant

Norplant offers new birth control alternative

By Mary Moore Parham
Staff Writer

It is no surprise that most birth control is geared toward women, simply because one egg is easier to manipulate than the 200 million sperm found in an average ejaculation. For researchers in the field of birth control, the number of sperm and eggs alone dictate the type of contraceptives produced.

Because most birth control is made for women, the user must assume the responsibility that comes with remembering to take a pill every day or routinely using a barrier method, such as a diaphragm or sponge to prevent pregnancy.

With the development and recent Federal Drug Administration approval of Norplant, however, women may choose a surgical implant which, once in place, provides five years of effective birth control.

The implant process for Norplant takes anywhere from 30 to 45 minutes and requires only a skin anesthetic such as Novocain and a Band-Aid to cover the incision, said Joanne Steane of the Student Health Service's Gynecology Clinic.

Six tubes are inserted in a fan-like fashion above the elbow on the inner part of the arm. Once inserted, the

tubes release a low dose of the same progesterone found in birth control pills to prevent ovulation, she said.

The woman's body will naturally produce a fibrous capsule around the tubes to help keep them in place, while their elastic composition prevents them from breaking, no matter how athletic or active the woman may be. There is a small scar from the initial insertion process, but unless the woman is very thin, the tubes cannot be seen, only felt under the skin.

Unlike birth control pills which have a theoretical failure rate of 0.1 percent in the best possible conditions, Norplant has nothing to do with the user. In clinical tests of 55,000 women in 40 countries, the failure rate has been only 0.04 percent, a figure comparable only to surgical sterilization, said Karen Price of Chapel Hill's Planned Parenthood.

In addition to its efficiency, Norplant was found to have few side effects in comparison with its contraceptive equivalents. Although there are reports of irregular bleeding and headaches, there is no risk of more serious effects such as pelvic inflammatory disease associated with an intrauterine device (IUD) or toxic shock syndrome which may result from a contraceptive sponge.

Norplant is also totally reversible and may be taken out before the five years is complete if the woman chooses

to become pregnant. The pregnancy rate of Norplant is 98 percent six months after removal, Price said.

When the implant was approved by the FDA in December 1990, it had undergone extensive testing in other countries as well as three clinical trials in the United States. But in the wake of problems with the IUD and its subsequent lawsuits, Norplant was researched "more than most drugs," Price said.

As with most contraceptive devices, Norplant is not the answer for everyone. Women with blood clotting disorders, undiagnosed vaginal bleeding, a known or suspected pregnancy, kidney disease or breast cancer are usually referred to alternative contraceptives.

Heavy smokers (15 or more cigarettes a day) are also cautioned about the risk of serious cardiovascular problems similar to the risk of smoking while on birth control pills, Steane said.

Although Norplant is approved and available in some parts of the country, the problem remains in training gynecologists and general practitioners in the implanting process. Steane recently completed the one-day training session for Norplant given by the Association of Reproductive Health Professionals.

Steane is currently the only member of the Student Health staff with a working knowledge of the implant, but, she said, they do not know when it will

become available to students.

"The association has taken upon itself to train people and usually gives two sessions a month around the country that train 100 people each. I think they will have people trained fairly quickly so that the implant becomes readily available," Steane said.

Norplant's next obstacle is its cost which can run from \$300-500 for the tubes in addition to a \$200 insertion fee and a \$300 removal fee. Because the implant lasts a full five years, the cost is comparable to what one might pay for birth control pills from a local drug store over the same amount of time. As with most birth control, Norplant is not necessarily covered by health insurance.

Because of its cost, Norplant does not present itself as an option to teenagers. But Price said that Planned Parenthood never turned away anyone seeking birth control if they could not afford it.

"Although we are not yet implanting Norplant, we would try to work out a payment plan over the five-year period or refer them to the Health Department or N.C. Memorial Hospital," Price said. "There haven't been a lot of new methods since the pill, and one more option for women is a real breakthrough. We need all the options we can get."

UNC ensemble brings dignified status to new music

Mozart may be magnificent and Beethoven may be beautiful, but music does not necessarily need to be old to be good. Contemporary music marks a new age of expression that can make a lasting impression on our generation. The UNC department of music proved this Tuesday night when they presented a concert of music composed this century.

The concert opened with "27514," a work written by UNC alumnus Dalton Winslow. It featured UNC's New Music Ensemble conducted by Roger Hannay. This exciting piece, made up of syncopated, conversational patterns running back and forth between the parts, was accented by a full array of traditional percussion instruments. The symmetric balance among the instruments made for a well-organized and

Susie Rickard Concert

wonderfully shocking performance.

The Sextet for Wind Quintet and Piano Op. 6 by Ludwig Thuille followed, featuring The University Chamber Players. The group projected a dramatic rendition of the piece, including expressive solos for the French horn and piano, thus adding poignancy to the flowing melodic lines. But often the lower instruments overpowered the higher voices of the flute and oboe, which produced a dense and cloudy sound.

The highlight of the evening was

Edith Gettes' superb performance of Eugene Ysaie's "L'aurore" from Sonata No. 5 Op. 27 for unaccompanied violin. The stirring piece, filled with syncopated pizzicato notes and colorful phrases marked with glissando (a backwards motion with the finger against the string), was performed with remarkable grace and candor. Gettes' playing sounded much like poetry, perfectly controlled and beautifully executed.

Guests from East Carolina University made up a percussion ensemble and continued the program with a trio for marimba. "Stuberic," composed by Marc Ford, was written in reminiscence of the marimba bands in Nicaragua. The composition, as well as the performance, was particularly interesting and amusing. The mallets danced in a

spritely manner over the entire instrument, including the sides and pipes, producing a magical effect.

The program concluded with a musical extravaganza. Lou Harrison's Concerto for Violin with Percussion Orchestra once again featured Gettes, this time with the ECU Percussion Ensemble. Gettes' commanding solo was accompanied by a host of unusual percussion instruments, including flower pots, washtubs and coffee cans. The finale was an original and expressive musical experience.

Although contemporary music may sound a bit foreign to the well-trained listener of Mozart, "new music" holds a prominent spot in musical society. It is the future as well as a true feast for the ears.

Poll shows Americans value God, health and a happy marriage

The Associated Press
NEW YORK — The Age of the Yuppie is dying. Faith in God is the most important part of Americans' lives, followed by good health and a happy marriage, according to a poll.

Forty percent of respondents said they valued their relationship with God above all else, while only 2 percent said a job that pays well was the most important thing in their life.

The telephone survey of 600 adults

was conducted Jan. 17-20 for the Lifetime television show "The Great American TV Poll." The survey by Princeton Survey Research Associates has a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 4 percentage points.

Fifty-eight percent of the respondents to a 1990 Associated Press poll conducted by ICR Survey Research Group said religion was very important in their lives, and 86 percent said it was either very important or fairly important.

Professional goals ranked at the bottom of the things Americans said were most important in their lives.

In addition to the 40 percent who said faith in God was what they valued most, 29 percent cited good health and 21 percent said a happy marriage was most important.

Money

have received about \$2.5 million apiece for advancing to the Final Four, Mickle said.

"We took kind of a big hit from the NCAA plan, but I think our people felt it was fair," he said. "It was good to split it between the whole membership."

Ballen said, "I think because of our conference being so strong, we will come out OK. Some conferences may not feel that way."

In the Big West Conference, one unhappy team may be the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, last year's national champion and a Final Four participant

this year.

In 1990, UNLV received \$1.1 million for winning the title, said Big West Commissioner James Haney. This year the school will probably make about \$200,000 under the reforms.

"I think it's difficult for UNLV or any institution if they've grown into the habit of depending on that money because of their success in the tournament," Haney said.

"Obviously it affects UNLV more than others, but they clearly have accepted it graciously," he said.

But the plan may do wonders for the

"little guys" of the NCAA. For example, the University of Toledo, of the Mid-American Athletic Conference, finished seventh in its conference last year and received \$62,000, almost \$300,000 less than the MAC's first-place team, said Karl Benson, MAC commissioner.

Toledo finished seventh again this year. But the NCAA will give the school about \$250,000 — the same as the conference's first-place squad, Eastern Michigan, Benson said.

"Overall, 1991 is much greater for all conference members," he said.

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That will give the department room to expand its employee training programs, Manwaring said.

"We've already scheduled training programs," he said. The department will continue to conduct on-campus training meetings for faculty and staff, he said.

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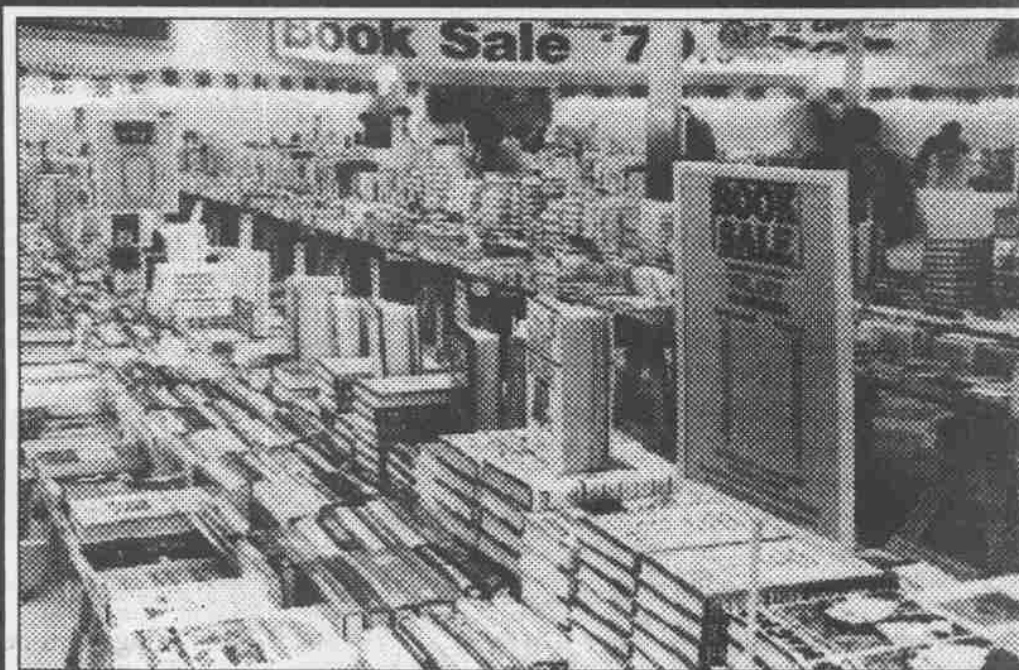
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