



Scott Kramer MD
Comprehensive, Contemporary, Compassionate Care for Women

Birth Control Without a Prescription. Really!

With support from OBGyns the California law passed back in 2013 that allows women to obtain birth control by simply visiting a pharmacist is finally becoming a reality. The intent is to reduce unplanned pregnancies. Contraceptives are not technically over-the-counter, but you can get them by talking to a pharmacist after filling out a questionnaire.

What kinds of birth control can I get?

The law covers self-administered hormonal birth control, which means pills, patches, Depo-Provera injections, and vaginal rings. Anything a doctor would have to insert, such as hormonal implants and intrauterine devices, or IUDs require you to visit your doctor.

Do I have to be a certain age?

No, there's no minimum age.

What happens when I visit the pharmacy?

A pharmacist will take your blood pressure and then ask you to fill out a questionnaire to make sure birth control is safe for you. Then you may request a specific contraceptive, or the pharmacist may recommend one.

Once you've selected your birth control, the pharmacist will explain how the medicine works, how to take it and what side-effects you might experience. You will also be reminded of the importance of health screenings, such as PAP smears for cervical cancer; and warned that birth control doesn't protect against sexually-transmitted diseases; which you may want to be tested for since they can cause infertility. Finally the pharmacist will give you the medicine along with a medication fact sheet.

How much does it cost?

If your insurance plan pays for your birth control, it should still be covered. It's unclear whether pharmacists will charge for screening patients and dispensing the birth control, but they could. Just remember any form of birth control is not only safer but far less costly than an unplanned pregnancy.

Can I go pick some up today?

Most pharmacy chains are not quite ready to comply when the law went into effect last Friday (April 8th). It's best to call your local pharmacy to determine when they will be participating.

We're here to help should you have any concerns about birth control.

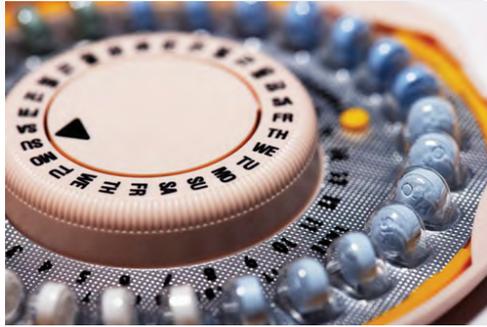
Wishing you good health,

Scott Kramer MD, FACOG



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Women Still Need Annual Pelvic & Breast Exam

The American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) supports federal legislation that was recently proposed to make hormonal birth control truly over-the-counter.

While most women dread their annual exam, ACOG reminds you that you need to visit your doctor each year for cancer screening and to address a variety of women's health issues that change over your lifetime.