

ask the sexpert

I am going away for the summer and will be separated from my boyfriend. I am thinking of discontinuing use of birth control pills for three months and then starting again in the fall. Is it unhealthy to go off the pill for such a short time?

It is not unhealthy to stop taking birth control pills for a three month period, but you should be aware of the minor side effects you may experience by doing this.

While your body is adjusting to the change in hormone levels, you may feel some of the same symptoms that are associated with starting the pill. This may include nausea, weight change, water retention, breast tenderness or depression.

In addition, your periods might be irregular. This is more likely if you had irregular periods before starting birth control pills. Irregular periods could cause a delay in going back on the pill since you need to have a period before starting a cycle of pills. Be prepared to use another method of birth control (such as foam and condoms) if you return before you can resume the pill. This is a possibility even if no side effects were experienced the first time you started taking birth control pills.

These cautions are not meant to discourage you. You should, however, consider what your reaction to these side effects

might be. Some women find them upsetting, while others are able to take them in stride. In spite of the possibility of side effects, going off of pills for the summer may be a good choice for you.

I recently saw coverage of a family sex education presentation given by Planned Parenthood at the Women's Symposium. As the parent of two young children, I am often at loss when dealing with the various sexual behaviors and the questions they raise. How can I get more information to help me in this area?

There is quite a bit of literature available on the "how to" of family sex education. It is important for parents to sift through the materials carefully to find those that best illustrate their personal values and beliefs.

Planned Parenthood carries a variety of pamphlets available for purchase at minimal cost dealing with issues related to sexuality and child development. We also have developed a bibliography of current books designed to help parents in their roles as sex educators. This is available free of charge.

A Family Sex Education program is also offered by the community education staff at Planned Parenthood. The purpose of the program is to aid and support parents as the primary sex educators of their

children. In group discussion, parents investigate ways in which children develop sexual attitudes and have an opportunity to discuss their own ideas and concerns about handling sexual topics with their children.

The presentation also includes a 30-minute film focusing on parents communicating with their children — from toddlers to college age — about sex. The program is available to community groups free of charge, and can be scheduled by calling Planned Parenthood.

This column is written by Planned Parenthood, 134 E. 13th Ave. 344-1611. Please send questions to Suite 300 EMU or to Planned Parenthood. Planned Parenthood is a private non-profit United Way agency providing comprehensive family planning services, pregnancy testing, education, information and referral.

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COBURG TOWN HALL PARK

Sat. May 30th at 12:00 Noon

U of O Cyclists: Meet at 11:00 a.m. Saturday to bike to Coburg (A 10-minute drive North on Coburg Road).

Why Coburg? Coburg was selected as the rally site because it represents Oregon's small town which has typically voted against full funding. This message will be carried to voters through the media.

Speakers: U of O Professors and Concerned Students.

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Don't forget to bring a lunch!

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