

Norplant: The best birth control lots of money can buy

By AMY FRANCIS

The Daily Kansan, U. of Kansas

Tired of taking the pill? Uncomfortable with the IUD? Do sponges and foams seem just a little...unnatural?

Then you may be a prime candidate for Norplant, the first new birth control device to be introduced in the United States in the last 25 years.

Norplant, which has been used by more than 1 million women throughout the world for the past 20 years, is hailed by many as a revolutionary means of preventing pregnancy.

Six implants, about one and one-half inches long and 2 millimeters wide, are inserted just below the skin of the upper inside of a woman's arm. The implants release a continuous low dose of levonorgestrel, a synthetic form of the female hormone progesterone.

"It's a fairly simple technique," said Julie Strickland, assistant professor of gynecology and obstetrics at the U. of Kansas Medical Center. "It works very much like a shot. You don't even need a stitch."

Within 24 hours of the insertion, the levonorgestrel travels to the brain and inhibits the production of hormones in the pituitary gland that normally signal ovaries to produce eggs. The implants release the hormones in potent amounts for five years, after which their effectiveness decreases and the implants should be removed, she said.

If a woman wants to continue to use Norplant, new implants can be inserted in the same location. Women also can have Norplant removed if they want to conceive. Fertility will return within three months, Strickland added.

Strickland said Norplant is 99.7 percent effective in preventing pregnancy for up to five years, making it the surest form of birth control on the market.

According to the American College Health Association, the pill is 97 percent effective in preventing pregnancy,

How Norplant Works: Six capsules filled with a synthetic progestin hormone are implanted beneath the skin on the inside of the upper arm (1). The bloodstream then carries the hormone, levonorgestrel, to the brain's pituitary gland. (2). The pituitary gland normally is responsible for creating hormones which trigger ovaries to produce mature eggs. The levonorgestrel, however, blocks the pituitary within about a day, thereby halting production of eggs and rendering the woman temporarily sterile (3).

1. The doctor first makes a 1/8" incision in the skin of the arm—small enough that no stitches are required.

2. A hollow feed tube is inserted in the cut slightly beneath the skin's surface.

3. Using a plunger-type device, the doctor then slides the hormone-filled capsules through the feed tube, turning the tube with each capsule to create a fan-shaped arrangement beneath the skin.

DAVID BOISVERT, THE TARTAN, CARNEGIE MELLON U.

while condoms work 90 percent of the time. The combined use of a condom and a spermicide is more than 99 percent effective.

But despite the benefits of Norplant, Kansas and other university medical centers across the nation report that few college women are utilizing the method.

Bennett Walstatter, chief of obstetrics and gynecology services at Truman-East Hospital in Kansas City, Mo., said the initial cost of the procedure might be scaring off students.

The one-time cost for implantation ranges from \$450 to

\$750, while the cost for removal is about \$100.

"For some people, that's somewhat prohibitive," Bennett said. "But that is for five years. Over the long term, it's actually less expensive (than other methods)."

A one-year supply of birth control pills costs about \$240, Walstatter said. Using the pill throughout the five-year effectiveness period of Norplant would cost about \$1,200.

Walstatter stressed that Norplant does not protect against sexually transmitted diseases, but can be used with a condom.

"I recommend condoms for anyone who is not in a monogamous relationship," he said.

Measles epidemic spurs 'no shot, no school' rule

By BOB BERLIN

University Daily, Texas Tech U.

Measles are back.

The highly contagious disease characterized by severe fever, headaches, upper respiratory infections, head congestion, body aches, sore throat and a dry hacking cough has been ravaging college campuses since 1989. And it shows no sign of slowing.

Last year, 17 colleges and universities in 14 states reported major outbreaks of measles, according to the national Centers for Disease Control. Overall, the CDC said college students accounted for 22 percent of all measles cases and for 27 of the 89 measles-related deaths in 1990.

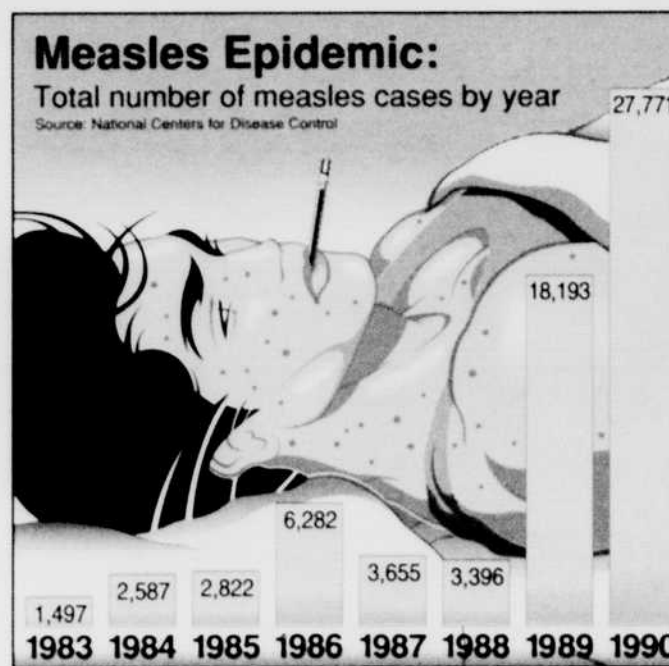
The warning signs began on campuses two years ago, when Northeastern U. in Massachusetts called off its final football game of the 1989 season with James Madison U. because some of the players and staff had measles.

By 1990, the U. of Georgia was forced to implement a "No Shots, No School" approach to control an epidemic until more than 21,000 students and faculty could be vaccinated. As many as 600 did not meet the deadline and were not allowed to register.

When the dust had cleared, the number of measles cases reported in the United States had skyrocketed from 3,000 in 1988 to more than 27,000 in 1990.

In response, health care administrators across the country are scrambling to control the disease, which is capable of leading to pneumonia, infection of the brain, and even death.

This year, the Immunization Practices Advisory Committee of the U.S. Public Health Department recommended that colleges and universities require incoming students to prove they have received a second measles vaccination before registering for classes.



MEL MARCELO, UCSD GUARDIAN, U. OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

And at least 10 states, according to the CDC, currently are considering legislation that would make it law that all college students and children be vaccinated a second time. Twenty-five states already have laws in place or have universities that have instituted this requirement.

Dr. Anthony Way, chairman of Preventative Medicine and Community Health at the Texas Tech U. Health Sciences Center, said college campuses are breeding grounds for the highly contagious disease to spread. Student vaccinations are vital to contain the spread, Way added.

"It may simply be a matter of chance," Way said. "Where a larger number of people are together the chance of spreading the disease is easy."

When the words get in the way:

Students tackle dyslexia

By JENNY LOFTUS

The Pine Log, Stephen F. Austin State U.

You might become frustrated reading this paragraph. You might want to scream and shout and throw it on the ground. You are probably stumbling over words, unfamiliar spellings and misplaced letters.

Welcome to the world of dyslexia.

Dyslexia is a learning disability which hinders one's ability to read. Unrelated to intelligence, instruction or educational opportunity, the condition may be inherent, congenital or caused by any number of injuries to the brain.

And it can be debilitating to the estimated 200,000 college students who suffer from dyslexia.

"(Dyslexia) makes school so much harder for me than the average person," said Mark Jarrell, a sophomore at Stephen F. Austin State U. "I have to go to class and read chapters two or three times."

Jarrell said he squeaked through high school by having his sister correct

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