The pill? where do I get it and do my parents have to know? [1]

Alice,

I read through all the questions about birth control pills but I didn't find the answer to the question I want to know? do you get the pill from your doctor? Also, can you get it without your parents knowing? And, around what price do they usually cost? Please hurry!

Thanks,
Clueless About the Pill

Answer

Dear Clueless About the Pill,

Yes, in the United States, the pill is prescribed to you by your health care provider. In order to determine whether or not the pill is a good option for you, your provider will do a physical exam and evaluate your medical history. This check-up and discussion at your visit are essential because some women have health risk factors that would make other forms of contraception better choices.

You mention that you don't want your parents to know that you're seeking the pill. If you are a minor (under eighteen years), and you live in the United States, you have rights to confidential reproductive health care. What this means is that unless you consent or give permission to your health care provider, s/he cannot disclose your medical records to anyone, including your parents (except in the case of abortion services, which depends on your particular state’s law). Additionally, since no state or federal laws exist at the present time [2] that would prevent minors from obtaining contraception, teens don't need parental consent or notification to get birth control pills, condoms, emergency contraception, and other contraceptive choices.

Even though you don't need consent, if you are on your parent's insurance and/or live at home, it may still be possible that your parents would find out about your appointments or prescriptions. Here are a couple of other things to consider when confidentiality is an issue:

- If you still live with your parents and you don't want to be contacted at home, talk with a staff member (a receptionist or billing person) about how the office or clinic can reach
You.

- If you are covered by your parents' health insurance and/or they are billed for your medical visits, ask your provider if the diagnosis and treatment on bills sent to them may compromise your confidentiality and how to prevent that from happening.
- If possible, pay with cash, which is the most secure and private payment method.
- If you just don't feel comfortable with seeing your regular health care provider, you can visit an adolescent health center or a center such as your local Planned Parenthood. These types of health centers are very familiar with concerns about confidentiality.

Oral contraceptives are covered through the student health insurance plan and prescriptions may be filled at any local pharmacy; the cost depends on brand and formulation. Clinics, such as the local Planned Parenthood clinic or adolescent health center, typically charge lower fees, and some services may even be free. Some Planned Parenthood centers have a sliding fee scale or other programs to reduce the cost of services and prescriptions.

As you mentioned, there's more information about the pill under the contraception section of Go Ask Alice!’s Sexual and Reproductive Health archive. Asking questions and gaining new information is a great step in taking responsibility for your reproductive health!

Alice!

Related questions

Resources
Medical Services (Morningside) [11] Medical Services (CUMC) [12] Published date: May 12, 2000 Last reviewed on: Jul 11, 2014

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