Can you order birth control pills over the Internet without a prescription or examination? [1]

Dear Alice,

I've heard that you could order oral contraceptives over the Internet without having a prescription or an examination. Is this true and if it is, where do I order them?

Answer

Dear Reader,

The Internet has created a new world of commercial opportunity. This is not always a good thing. Just as alligators weren't meant to be house pets, prescription medications may not be safe for everyone who has on-line access and a credit card. Even though oral contraceptives are safe and effective for millions of women, other women risk illness, or possibly other complications, by popping the pill. An online company will not be able to determine if you have high blood pressure, a history of blood clots, liver disease, or other conditions that could endanger your health if you take the pill. Only a health care provider can assess whether or not the birth control pill, or any other prescribed drug, is okay for a particular woman to use based on her medical and her family’s medical history.

In addition, it is important to remember that looks can be deceiving; that is, there is no way to ensure that the pills you receive are safe and the correct dosage. An internet provider may be sending you expired or recalled pills. Better to avoid any mix-up, both for your health and safety, and for ensuring the pills' efficacy.

Despite these downfalls of online ordering, there are places on the Internet that will sell oral contraceptives without a prescription. If the convenience, and possibly cost-savings, of purchasing the pill and other prescriptions over the Internet is attractive to you, make sure the site's pharmacy requires a valid prescription and other health information in order to dispense medications. Keep in mind that even if you've had a prescription for the pill in the past, the state of your health can change. That's why prescriptions expire or run out, so that your health care provider can reassess and follow-up on your new needs.
If money is an issue for you, or if you don't have health insurance, there are organizations that operate on a sliding scale and will provide free or low-cost health care and prescriptions. If convenience is an issue, keep in mind that your health is always worth the extra effort. You can check out Planned Parenthood to find a clinic near you.

Alice!
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Sexual & Reproductive Health
Contraception
Birth Control Pills

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Medical Services (CUMC)
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