

THE PILL OVER THE COUNTER: A SAFE OPTION

INCREASING ACCESS

Soon, people may have more kinds of birth control options over the counter on pharmacy shelves.

The FDA has set a path forward to bring oral contraception over the counter. Two pharmaceutical companies are in the final stages of approval, which could occur within the next few years.

OVER-THE-COUNTER

SAFETY

The pill has a 60-year safety record. It is not toxic, not addictive and has no risk of overdose, thus meeting the FDA criteria for OTC access. Other OTC drugs carry more serious risks, such as NSAIDs, Sudafed, Tylenol, antihistamines, and diet pills.

- Research has shown that **people can accurately identify if the pill is a safe option for them.** These facts are consistent with over-the-counter safety standards.
- **The pill meets over-the-counter health criteria.** The risks associated with hormonal birth control (e.g. VTE) are very small compared with the risks of unintended pregnancy.
- **Major medical groups** — including ACOG and the AMA — have urged the FDA to consider making the pill available over-the-counter to all ages.

REDUCING UNINTENDED PREGNANCY

Increasing access by making the pill available over the counter would make it easier for people to physically and logistically access birth control in their communities.

Almost half of pregnancies in the U.S. are unintended — modeling suggests that removing financial and prescription barriers could reduce unintended pregnancies in the U.S. by up to 25 percent.

Eighty percent of the global population already has access to the pill over the counter. Some countries such as the U.K. and the U.S. have been expanding access via pharmacists and the U.S. may soon consider full over-the-counter status.

“ THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS & GYNECOLOGISTS SUPPORTS OVER-THE-COUNTER ACCESS TO HORMONAL CONTRACEPTION WITHOUT AGE RESTRICTIONS. ”

MEDICAL ENDORSEMENTS

Almost three dozen medical organizations have signed a statement in support of FDA consideration of oral contraceptive over-the-counter status. This includes the American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists, American Academy of Nursing, American Academy of Pediatrics, National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners, National Hispanic Medical Association, Planned Parenthood Federation of America, Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine, Society of Family Planning, among other medical and civic groups.