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.

The pill has a 50+-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 (i.e., VTE) are very small compared with the risks of unintended pregnancy.
- Major medical groups — including ACOG and American Academy of Pediatrics — have urged the FDA to consider making the pill over-the-counter available to all ages.

The American College of Obstetricians & Gynecologists supports over-the-counter access to hormonal contraception without age restrictions.

“Providing patients with OTC access to the birth control pill is an easy call from a public health perspective as the health risks of pregnancy vastly outweigh those of oral contraceptive use.”

- AMA Board Member David Aizuss, M.D