Maternal and Child Health

Effective contraceptive use among women at risk of unintended pregnancy

Unintended pregnancy is associated with an increased risk of health problems for both women and babies. When used correctly, contraceptives are very effective at preventing unintended pregnancy. The most effective contraceptive methods, with failure rates of less than 1%, are those that do not require user intervention, such as male and female sterilization, intrauterine devices (IUD) and contraceptive implants. Moderately effective methods have typical-use failure rates of approximately 9%, and include hormonal pills, patches, rings, and shots. Moderately effective methods require consistent and correct use.

In 2012, 72.6% of women at risk of unintended pregnancy reported using the most effective or moderately effective methods of contraception. This proportion has increased slightly since 2010.

![FIGURE 1
Women at risk of unintended pregnancy who reported using effective methods of contraception](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>70.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>72.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>72.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Oregon Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS)*

In 2012, about 11% of women at risk of unintended pregnancy reported using no method of contraception, and 15% were using the least effective methods (condoms, diaphragms, spermicide and withdrawal). In addition, approximately 1% of women were using moderately effective hormonal methods but reported inconsistent use.
Much work remains to improve access to the most effective methods of contraception for those at risk of unintended pregnancy.

**Additional Resources:** [Reproductive Health Program, Oregon BRFSS](#)

**About the Data:** Data source is the Oregon Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS). Women at risk of unintended pregnancy are defined as women age 18-44 who are not pregnant, have not had a hysterectomy, are sexually active with an opposite-sex partner, and who answered the contraceptive use questions in the survey. Effective contraceptive methods are defined as the most effective methods (intrauterine device, implant, vasectomy and tubal ligation) and moderately effective methods (hormonal patch, ring, shot and pill) if the respondent indicates they are used “every time” the respondent has sex. Less effective methods include condoms, spermicide, diaphragm, and withdrawal.

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[Oregon State Health Profile](#)