COMMON MYTHS HEARD BY ADAGIO HEALTH NURSE PRACTITIONERS

Myth One
One of the most common misconceptions is that Depo-Provera (Depo) causes infertility. “I want babies when I’m settled.”

The decision to have children, and have them at the right time is an important one. When choosing a method of birth control to use prior to having children it is important to understand the facts about the method selected. The difference between Depo and other methods is that Depo can stay in the body for up to 18 months. During that time, you may not ovulate or have periods. Fertility (and periods) may return very quickly after stopping Depo, but it is different for every person. During this time, you are not experiencing infertility, but rather a delay in return to fertility. To ensure that you select the right form of birth control for you, it is important to talk to your medical provider about if and when you want to become pregnant.

Myth Two
“I don’t need a mammogram, because there’s no history of it in my family.”

The reality is that only 8-15% are inherited, the rest are bad luck, so it’s important to have a periodic mammogram.

Myth Three
“Urine pregnancy tests are not as accurate as blood pregnancy tests.”

Once a pregnancy begins, it can take several days for the pregnancy hormone (HCG) to build up to a level where it can be detected by the pregnancy test. By about a week after a missed period, the HCG hormone is high enough to be detected by either test. If it’s important to detect a pregnancy earlier than that, the blood test may be more sensitive than the urine test.

Myth Four
“It’s not healthy to miss periods or to not have periods while on Depo or Nexplanon.”

Depo and Nexplanon prevent the uterine lining from building, which is what produces a period. It is unhealthy to miss too many periods if you are not on Depo or Nexplanon, but it is normal to miss periods while taking these birth control methods.

Myth Five
“Pap smears cause infections.”

There is no evidence that pap smears cause infections. A pap smear is a sample of the cells on your cervix using a soft brush.

Myth Six
“If you have ANY pelvic exam, you are getting a pap smear test.”

We hear “the emergency room did my pap smear (pap) already.” There are many reasons to have a pelvic exam. A pap test is a screening tool to check for cervical cell changes. This test is not typically done in the emergency room, but is usually part of a preventive health exam.
Myth Seven
“You cannot contract a sexually transmitted infection (STI) if you are on birth control.”
*Birth control methods are designed to prevent pregnancy; they do not protect against STIs. Condoms are recommended for STI prevention.*

Myth Eight
“It is not normal to have 2 periods a month...one at the beginning and one at the end.”
*All women do not have the same menstrual cycle lengths. Periods are on average 28 days apart, but may range from 21-35 days in different women. If you have a shorter cycle length, it is very possible you will start another period in the same month.*

Myth Nine
“Periods must start on the same exact day of each month.”
Periods can vary from month to month.

Myth Ten
“A woman is fertile every day of the month.”
*A woman is typically fertile for about 5-9 days out of the month, prior to and during ovulation, and ovulation is usually around 14 days after beginning a period.*

Myth Eleven
“Birth control will mess up your body.”
*Birth control will temporarily prevent pregnancy, but your fertility will return to normal. With Depo, for instance, it may take longer for fertility to return than with other methods.*

Myth Twelve
“Depo makes you gain weight.”
*The hormone in depo increases your appetite. About one in four women using Depo will gain weight. You can maintain a healthy weight through diet and exercise.*

Myth Thirteen
“You must have a palpable lump to have breast cancer.”
*All lumps are not cancer and all cancer does not cause a lump. Mammograms can detect breast cancer without a palpable lump. Lumps can also be benign cysts or fibroadenomas, which are not cancerous.*

Myth Fourteen
“You don’t need a mammogram if the provider doesn’t feel a breast lump.”
*Mammograms can detect breast cancer even without a palpable lump.*

Myth Fifteen
“Douching is healthy for the vagina.”
*Douching is not necessary for keeping clean and is not healthier for the vagina. It alters the vagina’s normal bacterial environment, which can lead to PH imbalances, yeast infections, or bacterial vaginosis.*
Myth Sixteen
“You must douche to clean the vagina after sex or your period.”
The vagina cleans itself. Douching is not necessary and is not healthier.

Myth Seventeen
“Cervical cancer is genetic.”
Cervical cancer is caused by high risk strains of a virus called Human Papillomavirus (HPV), which is common in men and women. You can contract HPV by having sex with someone who has a high risk HPV type.

Myth Eighteen
“All abnormal paps mean you have cervical cancer.”
Paps are meant to detect early cell changes so they can be treated prior to developing cervical cancer. The majority of abnormal paps are not cancer.

Myth Nineteen
“If you have a hysterectomy, all of your female parts are gone.”
A hysterectomy typically involves removing the uterus. The ovaries may or may not be removed during the surgery. Often times, the ovaries remain to produce hormones through menopause and prevent osteoporosis from estrogen withdrawal.

Myth Twenty
“If it happened to your friend, it will happen to everyone.”
Everyone is different and should seek medical treatment and advice from a professional. They can help you identify not only what could happen, but also how likely it is to happen, so you can weigh risks and benefits.

Myth Twenty-One
“Dr. Google and WebMD are always right.”
There is a lot of good information available on the internet, however this information can be easily misinterpreted. It is best to rely on your medical provider to interpret the information. Adagiohealth.org has a resources page and medically accurate information.

Myth Twenty-Two
“If you are diagnosed with genital herpes, you can never have sex ever again.”
Herpes is a common viral infection that can be spread at any time. You can decrease the risk of transmission by taking suppressive therapy and using condoms. You should talk to your partner about your health status (and theirs) before having sex. If you are concerned that one of you might have an STI, get tested before having sex so that you do not transmit the STI between you.
Myth Twenty-Three
“If you never have genital sores, you have never been exposed to genital herpes.”
Many people have been exposed to herpes and never have sores. Your immune system can keep the virus suppressed. However, you could still transmit the virus to a sex partner. If you have any concerns, get tested.

Myth Twenty-Four
“You can't get an STI if you only have oral sex.”
You can get a STI in your mouth and throat including chlamydia, gonorrhea, and herpes. HVP can also be transmitted through oral sex which could lead to mouth or throat cancer.

Myth Twenty-Five
“You can catch STD’s from a toilet seat.”
This is very unlikely. Most STI’s need the correct environment to survive which a toilet seat does not provide.

Myth Twenty-Six
“Bacterial vaginosis turns into an STI if you don't get it treated right away.”
Bacterial vaginosis is not an STI. It is a pH imbalance in the vagina.

Myth Twenty-Seven
“Men can get bacterial vaginosis.”
Men do not get bacterial vaginosis and cannot transmit this infection to a woman. Bacterial vaginosis is a bacterial infection a woman’s vagina caused by a pH imbalance.

Myth Twenty-Eight
“You cannot get pregnant on the weekend.”
Anytime you have unprotected sex and a woman is ovulating, she can get pregnant. It does not matter what day of the week you have sex.

Myth Twenty-Nine
“PAP smear tests for all gynecological cancers including uterine, ovarian and cervical.”
Although these types of cancer are sometimes interrelated, the Pap test is only for cervical cancer.

Myth Thirty
“If I do not have a normal monthly period, something is wrong with me. Where's all that blood going?”
There are many reasons a woman may not have a period. In these cases, the uterine lining is usually not building up each month, so it doesn’t come off to cause menstrual bleeding. It could be related to pregnancy, medications, obesity, or hormonal imbalances. See a provider at Adagio Health if you have concerns about your cycle.