



Contraceptive Access for Drill Instructors

Allowance for Recruits to Have Contraception

- In line with [Defense Health Agency Procedural Instruction \(DHA-PI\) 6200.02 'Comprehensive Contraceptive Counseling and Access to the Full Range of Methods of Contraception'](#), Navy and Marine Corps **recruits are allowed and encouraged to continue their birth control method** (including pills, patches, rings, etc.) while in initial officer and enlisted training.
- Recruits can simply bring their prescription birth control with the identifying label on it and continue using the birth control during recruit training.
- Recruits with long-term methods such as intrauterine devices (IUDs) and subdermal implants can simply keep these in place.

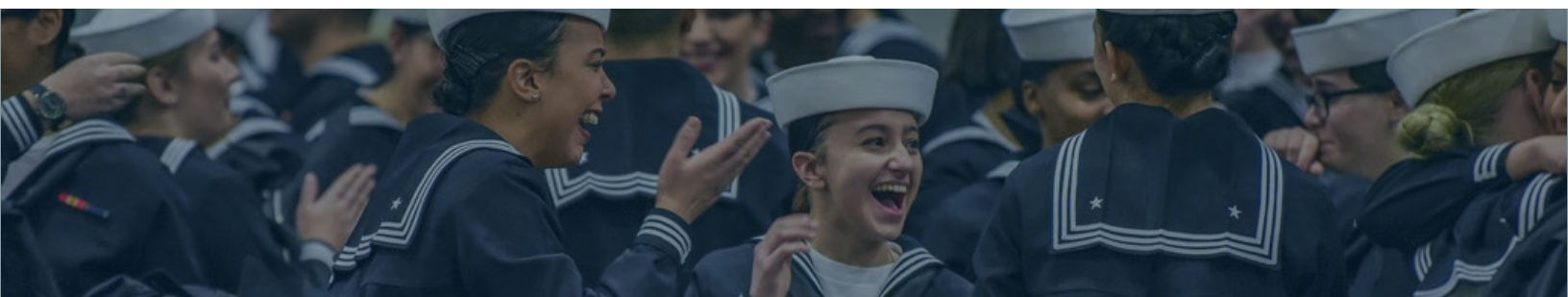
Guidance for Handling Contraception

Per the [Recruit Training Order](#), the following guidance for Drill Instructors details the handling of contraceptives at Recruit Training:

- Upon arrival, recruits will be asked to **document their birth control prescription** to inform the medical department at either Marine Corps Recruit Depots (MCRD) Parris Island, MCRD San Diego, or Recruit Training Command (RTC) Great Lakes that this medication is being continued from a civilian provider. Recruits should be made aware that this information will be kept confidential and only shared with medical personnel, not their peers or leadership.
 - Female recruits are encouraged to bring copies of exam records specifying type(s) of birth control pills presently and previously prescribed.
 - Female recruits can access a pharmacy at any time to receive contraceptive refills, if they have additional refills available.
- Female recruits will **maintain possession of their birth control pills** on their person throughout training.
- While all prescribed medications labeled as a controlled medication are to be documented in the Senior Drill Instructor (SDI) Medical Logbook and maintained in a secure container for the entire training cycle, **this rule does not apply for contraception.**
- Drill Instructors will not provide or allow other recruits to provide any medication, prescription, or over the counter drugs to recruits not prescribed by medical providers.

Benefits of Contraceptive Access for Recruits

- Recruits may use birth control for many reasons, including to regulate menstruation, manage menstrual symptoms, practice menstrual suppression (using medication to reduce or stop menstrual periods), and prevent pregnancy.
- Continuing birth control prior to entering recruit training will prevent hormone withdrawal symptoms during training.
- Contraceptives can be a critical tool to help female recruits maintain optimal health during recruit training.





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Importance of Contraceptive Education for Recruits

- Unintended pregnancy rates are **historically higher in the Navy and Marine Corps** compared to the civilian population, demonstrating the need for targeted family planning support.¹
- In 2018, 41% of unintended pregnancies among active duty service women occurred without contraception.²
- In 2018, 45%-59% of recent female enlisted pregnancies were unplanned.²
- The **high-risk population** for unintended pregnancy is **women ages 18 through 24**.²
- For the young, single, enlisted service member (among the most vulnerable), caring for an infant with limited support and resources can present significant challenges, such as maintaining the retention of service women, when obtaining childcare was extremely difficult.³

Obtaining Contraceptives

- Recruits at RTC Great Lakes, MCRD Parris Island, and MCRD San Diego receive a mandatory sexual and reproductive health medical brief and individual counseling.
 - This health brief includes health education on contraceptive options, emergency contraception, pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and preventative screenings.
- At RTC Great Lakes, recruits are required to **meet individually with medical providers** and are offered contraception at sick call and/or at Walk-In Contraception Clinics that provide same-day access to LARCs.
 - Recruits also are given a decision-making tool to determine which method, if any, is right for them and must meet with a medical provider to discuss their options one on one.
- Female recruits at MCRD San Diego and MCRD Parris Island also receive **mandatory and in-depth contraceptive counseling** at approximately training day 46.

Additional Resources

- Please review the following resources to learn more about women's health in the Navy and Marine Corps, and contraception options and resources available to service women.
- Drill instructors are encouraged to share the following women's health resources with recruits:

HELPFUL RESOURCES

- [Navy Medicine Women's Health Webpage](#)
- [Deployment Readiness Education for Service Women \(DRES\) App](#)
- [Decide + Be Ready Mobile App](#)
- [Is an IUD Right for Me? Myth Busting Patient Education](#)
- [Contraception Patient Decision Tool](#)
- [Accessing Emergency Contraception: Plan B](#)
- [Emergency Contraceptive Toolkit: Patient Education Handout](#)

¹ [Unintended Pregnancy and Abortion in the US Navy, 2016 - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)

² [2018 Personal and Professional Choices Survey Summary.pdf \(navy.mil\)](#)

³ [Improving the Health and Readiness of Military Women | Military Medicine | Oxford Academic \(oup.com\)](#)