



Proactive Planning: Helping Your Female Sailors & Marines Manage their Reproductive Health

Encouraging your female Sailors and Marines to consider contraceptive options and take action towards family planning protects women from the stress of an unintended pregnancy and promotes readiness across the force.

Unintended Pregnancy in the Navy

- Unintended pregnancy rates have historically been higher in the Navy compared to the civilian population, demonstrating the need for targeted family planning support.
- In 2018, **41% - 55%** of recent female enlisted pregnancies were planned.¹
- In 2018, **41%** of recent unintended pregnancies among active duty service women occurred without contraception.¹
- **The high risk population for unintended pregnancy is women ages 18 through 24.**

Mental Health Risks Associated with Pregnancy

- An unintended pregnancy is a risk factor for poor maternal mental health including perinatal depression, stress, and lower levels of psychological well-being and life satisfaction.²
- Research demonstrates that unintended pregnancies are strongly associated with poor mental health effects for women, both immediately and long-term.³
- Pregnancy intention is important for child and maternal health outcomes as pregnant women with unintended pregnancies are more likely to encounter risk factors such as cigarette smoking and alcohol use, and are less likely to seek proper prenatal care, breastfeed, and ensure their child receives the proper vaccinations.²
- Pregnancy may exacerbate existing mental health challenges and cause worsened symptoms during pregnancy.⁵
- Untreated depression in pregnant mothers can lead to long term effects throughout the child's development and places the child at risk for future mental health disorders.
- Mental health challenges triggered by pregnancy may be caused by factors outside of the hormonally-driven changes in mood.
 - Pregnancy may pose a stressful time as individuals prepare for parenthood and forge new identities - especially if a pregnancy is unintended.
 - Patients may feel frustrated or ashamed if their pregnancy experience does not match social norms surrounding pregnancy as a positive emotional experience, which can worsen symptoms.⁶

Emergency Contraception

- Plan B® and ella® are included on the Authorized Medical Allowance List (AMAL) and the Independent Duty Corpsmen (IDC) formulary.
- Plan B® does not require a prescription.
- **ella® requires a prescription.**
- Plan B® can be effective up to 72 hours following an unprotected encounter.
- Ella® can be effective up to 120 hours following an unprotected encounter.
- To access Plan B, direct women towards the ship pharmacy or IDC on duty.

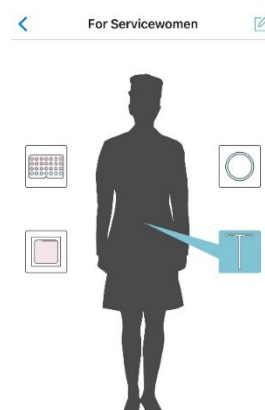
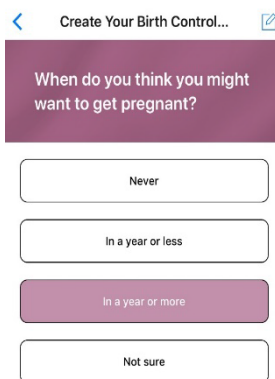
What can I do as a Deployment Resiliency Counselor?

- Make asking about contraception part of your assessment for all female Sailors and Marines.
- Refer Sailors and Marines to their primary care provider to learn about their contraception options and obtaining contraception.
- Direct female Sailors and Marines towards Decide + Be Ready app (see information below) to begin evaluating their options.

- **Decide + Be Ready** is a mobile app designed to help active duty women make decisions regarding contraception given their unique needs as service women.
- This app takes into consideration that service women, when deployed or working in uniquely challenging environments, may also choose to use one of the birth control methods to manage or even skip menstrual periods.



Scan this Quick Response Code to Download



Screenshots from the Decide + Be Ready mobile app

¹Personal and Professional Choices Survey 2018 ²BioMed Central, Pregnancy and Childbirth 2015 ³American Journal of Public Health 2016

⁴American Pregnancy Association ⁵American Psychological Association