

In a Perfect World, Men Would Share the Responsibility of Contraception

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Photo by [Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition](#)

Condoms. Vasectomies. Abstinence. Men have three contraceptive options. Women have 10+ including hormonal implants, shots, pills, vaginal rings, and bilateral tubal ligation aka “getting your tubes tied.” Honestly, what is there to complain about? We have so many options to choose from. Oh, and don’t forget about emergency contraception methods like Plan B. We have that too. What a privilege it is to have the choice of birth control and access to such methods. And, while I do agree with the previous statement of gratitude and recognition of the control we have of our bodies as women, I have always questioned just one thing: why do men not share the responsibility of contraception equally? Yes, I know, regulated contraceptives for men are difficult because the male reproductive system is vastly different from ours. Men produce millions of sperm per day, meaning that their contraceptive method would either need to stop the production of sperm, stop sperm from leaving the body, or from fertilizing the egg. And that’s pretty tricky.

However, in a perfect world, men should be more responsible for contraceptive options. Let me tell you why. Contraception has historically been the responsibility of women. However, since the creation of the most influential method of contraception- the birth control pill, women have been primarily accountable. Before the pill, there were not many reliable methods of contraception, for the most part only diaphragms, condoms, and cycle-tracking. And, although condoms have existed for centuries, you can increase their effectiveness by pairing them with another form of contraceptive, a choice many couples make. This innovation of a birth control pill allowed for the fundamental severance of the connection between sexual activity and potential conception. If used perfectly, the pill is now 99% effective and has catalyzed the creation of various forms of birth control. Yay for us. However, our variety of choices comes at a price. For decades, women have endured the symptoms and fear of (terrifying) potential symptoms that are present when one decides to take control of their contraception. Headaches. Nausea. Bloating. Weight gain. Mood changes. Increased blood pressure. Just to name a few. And, might I

add, these symptoms will mount on top of our monthly menstrual cycles that present their own set of symptoms.

Now, I wouldn't wish such symptoms on anyone. It's scary and they can be a pain. It is the price that one pays to avoid pregnancy when one may not be ready to bring life into the world. But again, why is this responsibility (through daily, monthly, and annual contraceptive options) mainly on women? In a world that provides men with more contraceptive options, I believe that men should take a more active role in contraception. Preventing pregnancy should be a shared responsibility. The woman has to carry the baby regardless, so perhaps prevention could be a joint effort. If there comes a day when men are provided with contraceptive methods that prove to be effective and safe, maybe men can begin to take such a widespread responsibility solely from women. This would be one way that preventing pregnancy could be a team effort and men could be given some of the responsibility that women have held for decades. It would only be fair.