

Unit 18

WITHDRAWAL

Learning Objectives

By the end of this unit, learners should be able to:

- ❖ Describe withdrawal as a contraceptive method and how it works
- ❖ State the effectiveness of this method
- ❖ Describe the characteristics of this method
- ❖ Determine medical eligibility for this method
- ❖ Provide client instructions for using this method
- ❖ Demonstrate competence in counselling clients about this method.

Teaching Resources in this Unit

Learning Activities

Role Play 419

Unit Assessment

Quiz Questions 419

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Unit 18: Withdrawal

Key Points

Withdrawal:

- ❖ **Is always available in every situation.** It can be used as a primary method or as a backup method.
- ❖ **Requires no supplies and no clinic or pharmacy visit**
- ❖ **Is one of the least effective contraceptive methods.** Some men use this method effectively, however. Withdrawal offers better pregnancy protection than no method at all.
- ❖ **Promotes male involvement and couple communication.**

18.1 Describing Withdrawal

Withdrawal is a contraceptive method in which the man withdraws his penis from his partner's vagina and ejaculates outside the vagina, keeping his semen away from her external genitalia.

- Withdrawal is also known as coitus interruptus and "pulling out."
- It works by keeping sperm out of the woman's body.

18.2 Effectiveness of Withdrawal

Effectiveness depends on the user: Risk of pregnancy is greatest when the man does not withdraw his penis from the vagina before he ejaculates with every act of sexual intercourse.

- When used correctly with every act of intercourse, about 4 pregnancies occur per 100 women whose partners use withdrawal.
- However, as commonly used, about 27 pregnancies occur per 100 women whose partner uses withdrawal. This means that 73 of every 100 women whose partners use withdrawal will not become pregnant. Therefore, withdrawal is one of the least effective methods in typical use.

18.3 Characteristics of Withdrawal

Advantages

- Always available in any situation
- Requires no supplies and no clinic or pharmacy visit
- Promotes male involvement and couple communication

Disadvantages

- One of the least effective methods
- Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV
- Can disrupt sexual activities
- Can be difficult to use successfully

Side effects, health benefits, and health risks

None

18.4

Medical Eligibility Criteria

For Withdrawal

All men can use withdrawal. No medical conditions prevent its use.

18.5 Timing: When to Use Withdrawal

- Withdrawal can be used at any time.
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- 18.6 Explaining How to Use

When the man feels close to ejaculating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He should withdraw his penis from the woman's vagina and ejaculate outside the vagina, keeping his semen away from her external genitalia.
If man has ejaculated recently	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Before sexual intercourse, he should urinate and wipe the tip of his penis to remove any sperm remaining.

18.7 Counselling Messages on Use

Learning proper use can take time.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suggest the couple also use another method until the man feels that he can use withdrawal correctly with every act of intercourse.
Greater protection from pregnancy is available.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Suggest an additional or alternative family planning method. (Couples who have been using withdrawal effectively should not be discouraged from continuing.)
Some men may have difficulty using withdrawal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advise that withdrawal is not a suitable method for:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Men who cannot sense consistently when ejaculation is about to occur• Men who ejaculate prematurely.
Couples can use emergency contraceptive pills (ECPs).	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain ECP use in case a man ejaculates before withdrawing (see Emergency Contraceptive Pills, Unit 14). Give ECPs if possible.

Withdrawal Role Play

Situation

A married couple comes into the clinic seeking a contraceptive method. They want to use a “natural” method but, because the woman’s menstrual periods are not regular, the couple understands that they should not use “natural” methods. They want to know what other options they may have.

Withdrawal Quiz Questions

1. The withdrawal method of family planning requires:
 - a. Withdrawal of the penis from the vagina after sexual intercourse
 - b. Sex without penetration of the vagina
 - c. Withdrawal of the penis from the vagina during sexual intercourse, before ejaculation
 - d. None of the above
2. As commonly used, withdrawal has an effectiveness rate of:
 - a. 4%
 - b. 17%
 - c. 27%
 - d. 38%
3. Men with the following conditions are not eligible to use the withdrawal method of family planning:
 - a. Have AIDS and are taking ARVs
 - b. Have a history of cardiovascular problems
 - c. Have had a vasectomy
 - d. All men are eligible to use withdrawal; there are no medical contraindications for the method.

Withdrawal Quiz Questions Answer Key

1. The withdrawal method of family planning requires:
 - c. **Withdrawal of the penis from the vagina during sexual intercourse, before ejaculation**
2. As commonly used, withdrawal has an effectiveness rate of:
 - c. **27%**
3. Men with the following conditions are not eligible to use the withdrawal method of family planning:
 - d. **All men are eligible to use withdrawal; there are no medical contraindications for the method.**

References

World Health Organization/Department of Reproductive Health and Research (WHO/RHR) and Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health/Center for Communications Programs (CCP), Knowledge for Health Project. *Family Planning: A global handbook for providers (2008 update)*. Baltimore and Geneva: CCP and WHO/RHR. <http://info.k4health.org/globalhandbook/>