



THE LOVING CHOICE

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Beginning or End?

How old do I want to be when my youngest graduates? This question arose when a colleague in his sixties once mentioned that he could not begin to think of retiring because he still had children in grade school.

If I want to start saving seriously for my retirement when I am sixty, then my youngest needs to graduate at that time, usually at age 23, and so must be born when I am 37 or younger. If I plan to have three children spaced three years apart, the first must be born when I am 31 years old, and conceived when I am 30 or younger.

It is not uncommon in our society for couples to try for two years or more to have their first baby; we may need to plan on starting our family when I am 28 or younger.

The average age at which couples marry today is 28 for men, and 25 for women. Many plan on waiting five years or more before starting their families. Not infrequently that leaves a small window for having children, and there are few families with more than two or three kids.

The U.S. population now grows by immigration. Our birth rate is declining. To replace ourselves, those married couples who are able to have children need to have 3.5 children each. For each couple with two children, another couple needs to have five.

Send articles, questions, suggestions, letters, to the editor, Dorothy Stapel by: phone: 313-237-4679 or 313-292-1294 or fax: 313-237-5867 e-mail: nfp@aod.org USPS: Department of Education, NFP 305 Michigan Avenue Detroit, MI 48226-2605

Items of Interest:

Billings web site has two pages that show animated developing activities in a woman's cervix and in the reproductive system at various phases of the cycle.

To access these features go to <http://www.woomb.org/bom/cervix/behaviour.html> or <http://www.woomb.org/bom/ovCycle/animation.html>

Accredited courses for doctors can be accessed at the same site. Many other features of interest exist as well.

A Catholic Bioethics Seminar Saturday Feb. 28, 2004 9am - 5pm at St. Mary Cathedral, Lansing, MI. Registration before 2/14/04 is \$40.00. For more details visit their web site: http://home.catholicweb.com/nfplanning/files/Flyer_CBS_for_parishes_104.pdf

or call 517-342-2587 or mail fee and info to: Natural Family Planning Program Diocese of Lansing 300 W. Ottawa Street Lansing, MI 48933

Mark your calendars: March 27, 2004

A half day NFP review seminar on abstinence, infertility, nursing, pre-menopause, stress.

Saturday March 27 2004 from 9:30 am - 12:30 pm

St. Sebastian School, corner of Polk & Colgate Dearborn Heights

Phone: 313-237-5893 to register.

For more details visit our web site: <http://www.nfponline.org> click in left margin on "Special Events" then on "NFP Review Class"

Morning After Pill

The FDA is considering a proposal to allow emergency contraception (EC) or "morning-after" pills to be sold over the counter (OTC) - no prescription. A decision is likely in February 2004.

Claims: OTC EC will reduce abortions, and does not cause abortions itself.

Facts: These pills may suppress ovulation early in the cycle; speed up ovulation in the fertile phase; affect mucus glands (and fertilization); slow transport of the fertilized ovum increasing ectopic pregnancy chance; affect the endometrium to inhibit baby implantation, resulting in abortion.

Risks: abortion, pas (= post abortion syndrome), a potentially fatal ectopic pregnancy, promiscuity and STD's, routine use with possible risks similar to other oral contraceptives, e.g. heart attack, blood clots, cancer.

Contraindicators: smoking, breast cancer, liver problems, unexplained bleeding; for repeat use: diabetes, heart disease, thrombosis.

Concerns: No medical supervision or counseling for a potent drug, possible routine use especially by minors.

Statistics for OTC EC use:

U.K.: Ectopic pregnancies increased more than fourfold to one in sixteen. Repeat use is at high levels.

Washington: EC available since 1997, Chlamydia grew by 56% over 5 years; abortion trends stayed the same.

For more detailed information:

<http://www.usccb.org/ogc/ec-fda.htm>
<http://www.usccb.org/prolife/publicat/lifeissues/121903.htm>
or <http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/abortion/fact1098.htm>
or <http://www.usccb.org/prolife/programs/rlp/01wil.htm>