FAMILY PLANNING UNMET NEED

TOPIC: Myths and misconceptions about family planning

Guests:

- Nurse Mildred
- Nurse Betty

Objectives of the programme:

- To dispel myths and misconceptions about family planning.
- Address the specific fears and concerns among couples regarding family planning methods.
- To create a positive (and desired) image of people who use modern family planning methods.
- To encourage listeners to seek more information about family planning.

Questions for the interviewer:

1. Nurse Mildred, is it true that family planning is only for women?
2. Why is it important for couples to discuss family planning?
3. Does family planning make a woman infertile?
4. Is it true that family planning methods cause cancer?
5. Is it true that family planning methods reduce a woman’s sexual desire?
6. How can side effects of family planning methods be handled?
7. Nurse Mildred, I often hear people say that when you use family planning methods, you give birth to a child with defects like no eyes, ears etc. Is this true?
8. What are the benefits of family planning?
9. How can listeners ask about the family planning services to get more information? (What should they ask? To whom? Where? When? Why should they ask – give reasons to motivate seeking more information)

Key Points – Myths and misconceptions about family planning

- Family planning methods can be used by both men and women. The methods are even more effective when both partners are involved and supportive of each other.
- Using family planning methods does not reduce a man’s or woman’s sexual desire.
- Family planning methods do not cause infertility. Fertility usually returns when a woman ceases to use the method.
- Male condoms cannot get lost in a woman’s vagina or uterus and cannot travel through a woman’s body.
• Some family planning methods may cause side effects but these are manageable and usually disappear with time. Clients should visit a health facility if the side effects if they continue to be bothered by the side effects.
• Condoms are an appropriate contraceptive method for anyone, regardless of marital status or sexual behavior. While many partners rely on condoms for STI protection, married couples all over the world use condoms for pregnancy protection too.

* These are questions related to the many prevalent myths related to myths and misconceptions. If you are asked one of these questions, you should make a clear concise response, and then if appropriate refer them to a medical provider.

**Frequently Asked Questions about myths and misconceptions.**

**Q** What are some of the side effects of using family planning methods and how can they be handled?

**A** Some women may experience headaches, irregular bleeding, mild abdominal pain, weight change among others. These can all be managed and disappear with time but if they get worse, then you should visit the health facility/health worker.

**Q** Do family planning methods such as the pill cause birth defects??

**A** No, evidence shows that pills will not cause birth defects and will not harm the fetus if a woman becomes pregnant while taking the pills or accidentally takes the pills when she is already pregnant.

**Q** Does the pill cause cancer?

**A** The Pill actually provides a protective effect from cancer of the ovaries and cancer of the endometrium (the lining of the uterus).

**Q** Do some family planning methods such as the pill make a woman infertile?

**A** When a woman goes off the family planning method, it may take a few months for cycles to return to normal or for her to get pregnant. It could be argued that being on the some family planning methods such as the pill actually contributes to the preservation of women's fertility as it reduces the incidence of a number of conditions which impact on fertility (eg. ectopic pregnancies, and fibroids).

**Q** Does vasectomy make a man lose his sexual ability? Does it make him weak or fat?

**A** No. After vasectomy, a man will look and feel the same as before. He can have sex the same as before. His erections will be as hard and last as long as before, and ejaculations of semen will be the same. He can work as hard as before, and he will not gain weight because of vasectomy.
Q Will a woman lose her sexual desire after getting her tubes tied?
A Tubal ligation will not make the woman to lose sexual desire. Infact, she may enjoy sex more without the fear of pregnancy.

Q Where can I get more information about family planning for family planning?
A From a health facility with the sign of the rainbow over the yellow flower or call the national hotline on at 0312 500 600 or 0800 200 600. Or send her an SMS at: Type FP (leave Space) Write comments or questions and send to 8198.