



 **MCI**
Male Contraceptive
Initiative

Interest Among U.S. Men for New Male Contraceptive Options

Consumer Research Study





“ I’d like to participate equally with my partner in deciding if and when to start a family. ”

ABOUT

Male Contraceptive Initiative (MCI)

MCI's mission is to facilitate research & development of male contraceptives for people around the world and to build awareness among researchers, donors, and the general public about the demand for and status of novel male contraceptive methods.

MLF Marketing

MLF Marketing helps small and medium organizations understand their consumer, quantify their opportunities, and develop business strategies by conducting primary research and mining relevant secondary data.

CONTENTS

PAGE

I. Executive Summary 6

II. Methodology 7

III. Introduction 8

IV. Key Findings 10

V. Current Practices & Attitudes 12

VI. Interest in Potential New Male Methods 20

VII. Characteristics of New Male Methods 26

VIII. Conclusion 30



Male Contraceptive Initiative led a study to identify unmet needs and satisfaction with current contraceptive methods among a sample of men across key market segments.

To the best of our knowledge, this is the largest survey in the United States in the last ten years exclusive to sexually active men ages 18-44 to better understand their attitudes, needs and motivations regarding the future of male contraception as a family planning method.



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License. You are welcome to share, copy, distribute or adapt the work, with attribution as follows:

Friedman, M; Nickels, L; Sokal, D;
Hamlin, A; King, G; Levine, D; Vahdat, H; Shane, K.

Durham, NC: Male Contraceptive Initiative.
February, 2019.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

There is substantial opportunity for male contraceptives to positively contribute to the benefits of family planning and improved quality of life for all people. More than eight in ten men aged 18-44 surveyed in the U.S. are currently trying to prevent a pregnancy. This could translate to 17 million men looking for new forms of contraception that meet their needs and those of the relationship they are in. Of these 17 million men, 8.1 million are very likely to use new male methods, and 5.6 million are somewhat likely to do so.

Key Findings:

- 85% of participants want to prevent their partner from getting pregnant and 60% of those men cite taking responsibility for birth control as the key reason for wanting a new male method
- 82% of men whose partners experienced an unplanned pregnancy in the past are interested in new methods of male contraception
- Men are twice as likely to prefer a non-hormonal method (80%) to a hormonal method (38%)
- 89% of men report it's important for their contraceptive method to be reversible
- Eight in ten men say that it is very or somewhat important for a contraceptive method to protect against STDs

Men are most interested in a non-hormonal pill and other forms of non-hormonal contraception that are safe, effective, and reversible.



II. METHODOLOGY

In 2017, Male Contraceptive Initiative collaborated with MLF Marketing, an independent market research consultancy, to conduct an online marketing survey across a sample of 1,500 males ages 18-44 living in the U.S.

To qualify for the survey, men were currently having or expected to have sexual intercourse with women in the future. All participants had no personal or religious beliefs that would prevent them from using contraception.

Quotas were placed on the following:

Age cohorts (N=300 per cohort): 18-24, 25-29, 30-34, 35-39, 40-44

Relationship status:

25% not in a long term relationship

50% married

25% in a long term relationship but not married

Response data were weighted by age in proportion to the population.

MLF Marketing verifies the results of this survey as representative with a margin of error of +/- 3% of the English speaking US Male population aged 18-44 who have internet access.

Demographics

- 79% are Caucasian or White, followed by 9% Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin, then 8% Asian or Pacific Islander, and 7% African American or Black.
- 61% have no children, with 17% having 1 and 16% having 2. Only 6% have 3 or more children.
- 46% of respondents do not have a college degree.
- 60% of respondents have a household income under \$75,000, with 17% earning \$17,000 or below.

III. INTRODUCTION

Unplanned pregnancies - which account for nearly half of all pregnancies worldwide¹ - present significant immediate and long term effects related to health, poverty, and education, among other critical global issues. While use of contraception has been found to have a demonstrated impact on these issues², condoms remain the only reversible method of contraception available for men. With an actual-use pregnancy rate of 13%³, it is clear that not only is there a need for more methods, but more effective methods of reversible contraception for men.

The limited number of male contraceptive options has a profound impact on couples as the onus of contraception continues to fall on female partners, who often face side-effects associated with the predominantly hormonal options available to them. To speak of an actual contraceptive “method mix” requires inclusion of methods that allow men to take an active role in planning pregnancy for themselves and their partners.

While there are data demonstrating a demand for male contraceptives, the research is limited and the detail behind demand is not well understood. Much of the existing data are based on hormonal method acceptability and not stratified by discrete categories such as age and marital status.

Male Contraceptive Initiative (MCI) supports the research and development of non-hormonal, long acting, and reversible methods of male contraception by providing funding, technical advice, and advocacy support for practitioners in the field. In an effort to inform the mission of MCI and more accurately convey the demand for male contraceptive methods, MCI commissioned this consumer research study to measure satisfaction with current contraceptive methods, identify unmet needs, and assess interest in potential new male contraceptive options.

¹ Bearak, J., Popinchalk, A., Alkema, L., & Sedgh, G. (2018). Global, regional, and subregional trends in unintended pregnancy and its outcomes from 1990 to 2014: estimates from a Bayesian hierarchical model. *The Lancet Global Health*, 6(4), e380–e389. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(18\)30029-9](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(18)30029-9)

² Sonfield, A., Hasstedt, K., Kavanaugh, M., Anderson, R. (2013). *The Social and Economic Benefits of Women's Ability To Determine Whether and When to Have Children*. Guttmacher Institute: https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/social-economic-benefits.pdf

³ Sundaram, A., Vaughan, B., Kost, K., Bankole, A., Finer, L., Singh, S., & Trussell, J. (2017). Contraceptive Failure in the United States: Estimates from the 2006–2010 National Survey of Family Growth: contraceptive failure rates in the U.S. *Perspectives on Sexual and Reproductive Health*, 49(1), 7–16. <https://doi.org/10.1363/psrh.12017>

The study's specific goals were to:

- Identify incidence of methods men currently use to protect against unwanted pregnancy
- Determine if male contraceptive methods currently used address men's needs
- Identify desirable attributes of male contraceptive methods currently used by men
- Identify unmet needs of men with respect to male contraception
- Determine interest level in potential types of new male contraceptive options (e.g., hormonal or non-hormonal, delivery mechanism, etc.)
- Identify desired attributes and degree of importance for male contraceptive methods
- Understand differences and similarities with respect to male contraceptive needs across key segments



IV. KEY FINDINGS

There is a substantial market for male contraception in the United States.

More than eight in ten men aged 18-44 who have sex with women, who have not had a vasectomy and whose beliefs do not prevent them from using contraception are currently trying to prevent pregnancy. More than half (56%) of this group are unwilling to accept a pregnancy at this time. This translates to 17 million men looking for contraceptive methods that fit their lifestyle and relationship. Of these men, 8.1 million are very likely to use new male methods, and 5.6 million more are somewhat likely to do so.

Of the additional 41% of men who are currently trying to prevent pregnancy, though they would accept a pregnancy if it occurred, one third are very interested in the new methods. This translates to a third group of 5.4 million potential users, and over 19 million potential users total.

17 Million
Men
are looking for contraception
that fits their lifestyle and
relationship

The commitment behind the numbers is real.

More than eight in ten men say that they either feel solely responsible for contraception, or that they share responsibility with their partner. These men are a well-defined group based on the number of children they have, their history, and their current contraceptive practices.

Men's desires for greater effectiveness and control fuel their interest in new methods.

While men report high satisfaction with current male methods, their interest in new methods and reasons for such interest (e.g., certain protection against pregnancy and the ability to take control) indicate that they would seriously consider switching to new male methods.

Minimal side effects and reversibility are must haves.

Men report little tolerance for side effects, particularly depression and reduced libido. Interruption during intercourse is also highly undesirable. In addition, men express the need for reversibility as a required attribute of a new method. Men also seek a non-hormonal method which is at least 99% effective. A successful new male contraceptive product should have all of these attributes.



V. CURRENT PRACTICES & ATTITUDES

More than 80% of men are currently trying to prevent pregnancy.

Half of this group are trying to prevent pregnancy at all costs and half are generally trying to prevent pregnancy but they could accept it if it occurred. Only 7% are actively trying to get their partner pregnant.

Men more interested in preventing pregnancy:

- Are not in a relationship
- Are more likely to use condoms than men who aren't as committed to preventing pregnancy
- Are of lower income. Men with income of \$50-\$100K are more likely to be trying to prevent pregnancy whereas men with income of \$100-\$150K are more likely to be trying to conceive.

More than 80% of men feel sole or shared responsibility for pregnancy prevention.

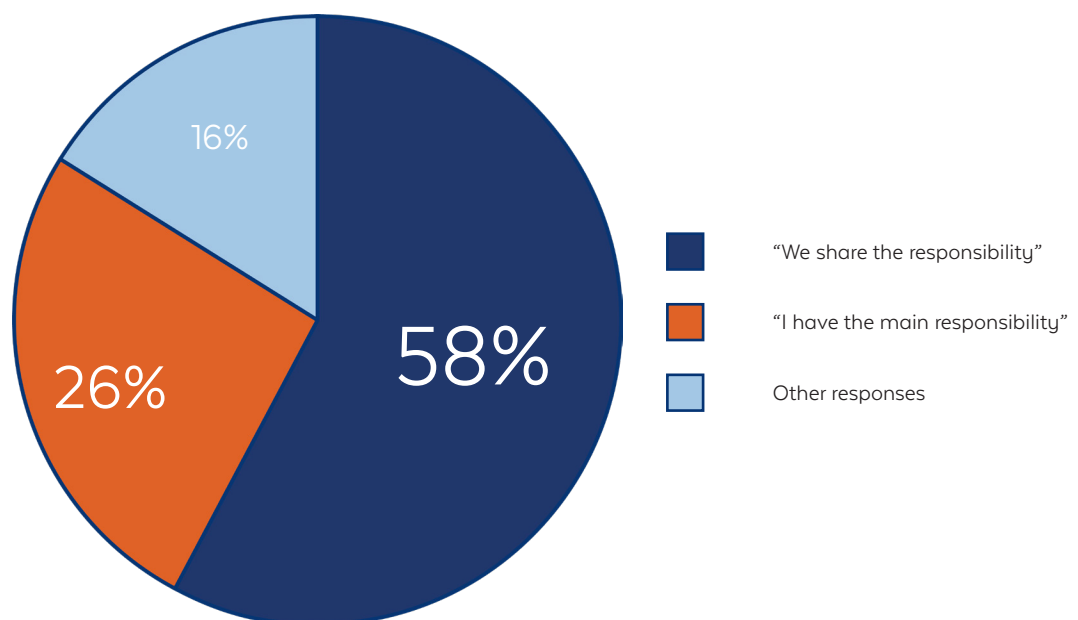


Figure: Men's perceived responsibility for preventing pregnancy.

Men who feel solely responsible for contraception:

- Have more children than men who don't feel responsible
- Have intercourse frequently
- Are trying to prevent pregnancy at all costs
- Are more likely to have a partner who doesn't use contraceptives
- Currently use male contraceptives more frequently
- Are more likely to use condoms than men who don't claim responsibility
- Are more likely to have caused an unwanted pregnancy in the past

Just over **one in four men** have had intercourse lead to an unwanted pregnancy, and **8%** have had it occur more than once.



More than 50% of men use a male contraceptive method half the time or more. Three in ten use one whenever they have intercourse.

When you have intercourse how often do you use a male contraceptive method?

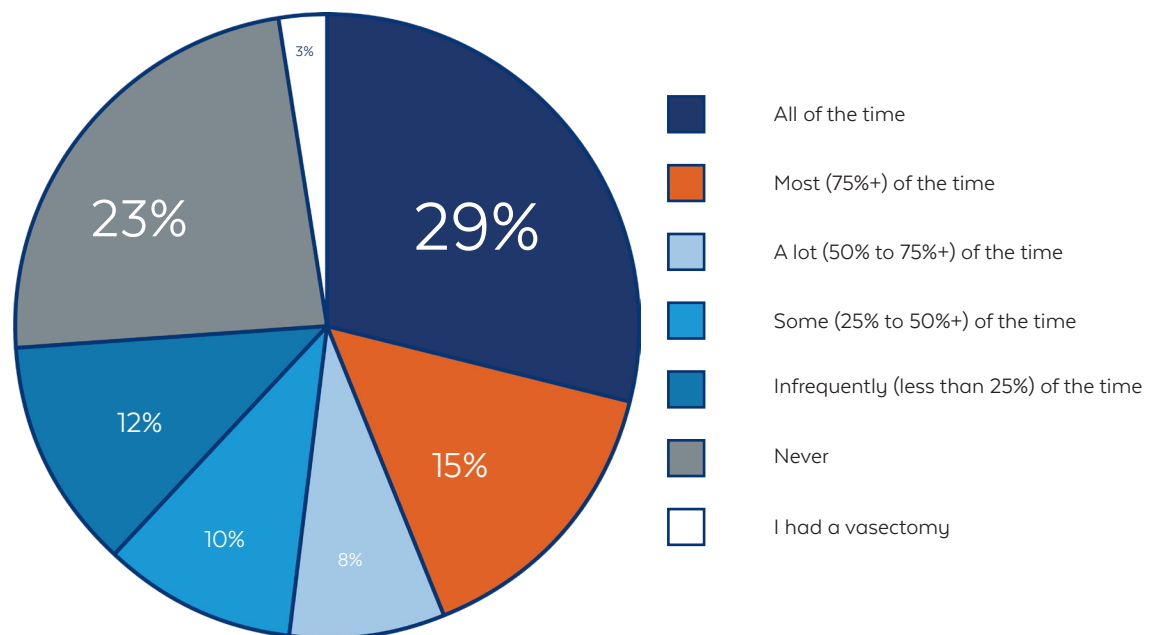


Figure: Frequency of male contraceptive use.

Factors impacting frequency of male contraceptive usage are:

- **Age:** Usage of male contraceptives drops drastically after age 40, closely linked to partner's age and fertility
- **Relationship Status:** Usage drops when the couple is in a relationship
- **Type of Contraception Partner Uses:** Men whose partners are on The Pill are less likely to consistently use male contraception than those whose partners use female condoms, a vaginal ring, or an IUD.
- **Satisfaction with Condoms:** Men who are dissatisfied with condoms are more likely to never use contraception

- **STD Concerns:** Men who aren't worried about STDs are less likely to always or frequently use contraception
- **Perception of Responsibility for Pregnancy Prevention:** Men who say that contraception is their partner or no one's responsibility are less likely to consistently use it themselves
- **Number of Children Desired:** The fewer children a man wants to have the more often he uses male contraception. Current number of children does not impact how often a man uses contraception

Condoms are the most common form of male contraception used.

Seven in ten men who use male contraception use a condom. This rate is twice as high as the next method – withdrawal. The more often a man has intercourse the more likely he is to use condoms. Also, the more educated a man is the less likely he is to use withdrawal with the choice of condoms or a vasectomy as a function of life stage/relationship status.

Men not in a relationship are more likely to use condoms, but men in a relationship are more likely to use withdrawal. This finding has two potential explanations. One is that men not in a relationship are more concerned about STD protection. It could also be inferred that men in a relationship are less concerned about an unplanned pregnancy, however an unplanned pregnancy in the past appears to have no impact on current choice of male contraceptive.



The male contraceptive method used most often closely mirrors methods ever used.

This indicates consistency in the method used by any individual man. Condoms are used most often by six in ten men. Withdrawal is used equally as often as no male contraception.

The method used most often correlates with men's sense of who is responsible for contraception and is likely related to the degree of commitment in their relationship:

- Men who use condoms say contraception is their responsibility
- Those who use withdrawal say it's their partner's
- Those with vasectomies say it is a shared responsibility



What Type of Male Contraceptive Methods Do You Use Most Often?

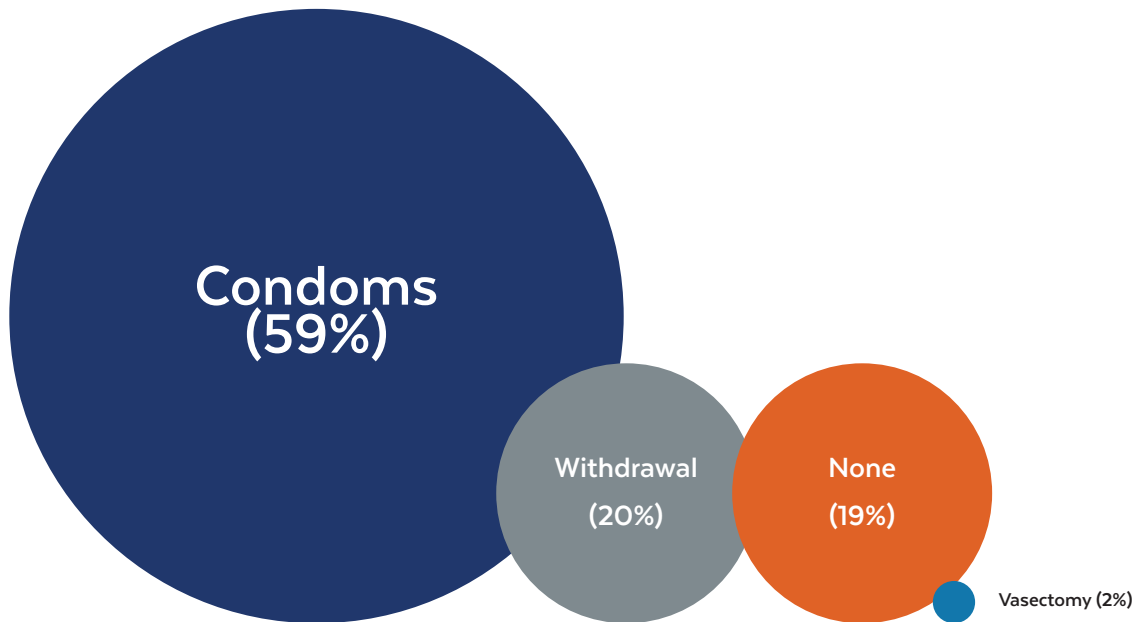


Figure: Type of male contraception used most often.

What Type of Male Contraceptive Methods Do You Ever Use?

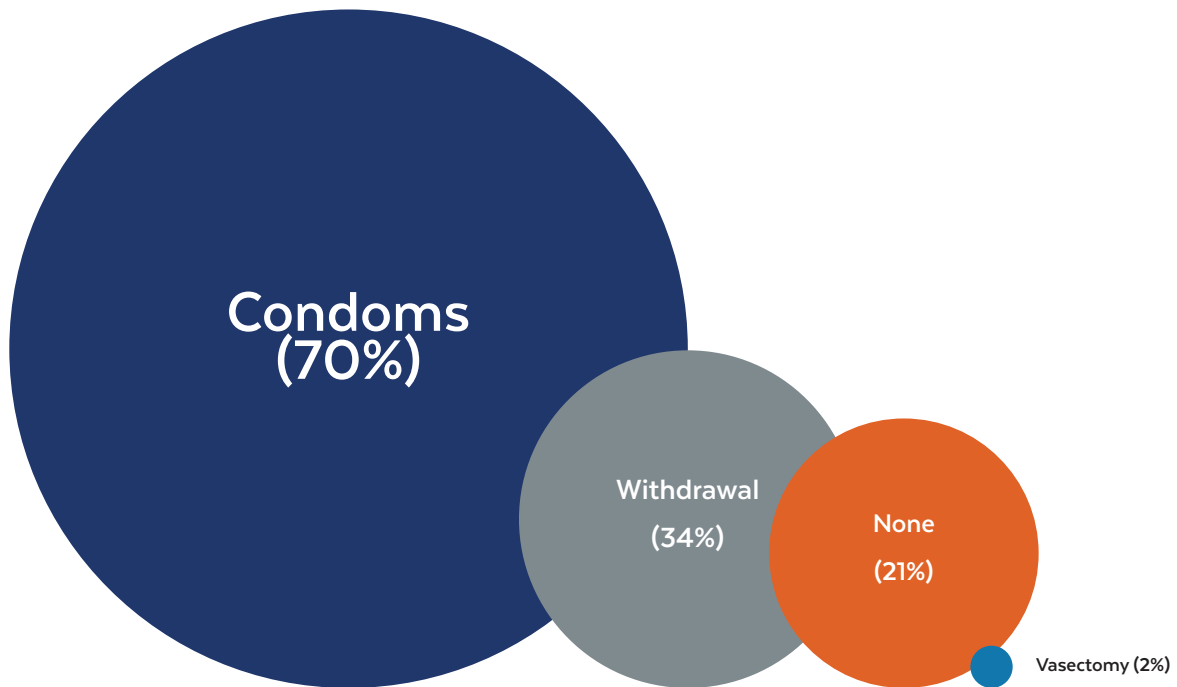


Figure: Type of male contraception ever used.

Satisfaction with condoms is higher than withdrawal, but only half of men responded as “very satisfied”.

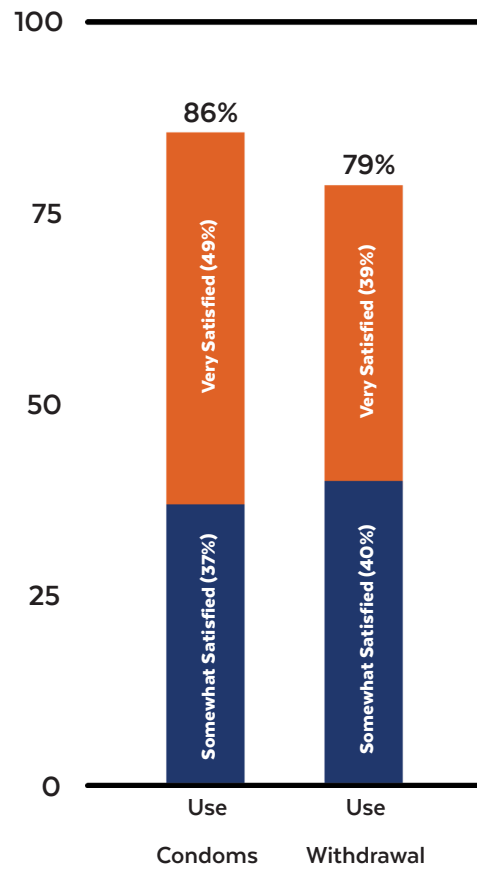


Figure: Satisfaction with condoms and withdrawal

Reasons for satisfaction or dissatisfaction with current methods were not asked for directly but some conclusions can be drawn from the reasons for interest and disinterest in new methods. Men who use condoms and withdrawal are most concerned about preventing pregnancy whereas men who have had a vasectomy are most concerned about taking responsibility.



“ My wife’s options for contraception are limited. Women shouldn’t have to be the only ones responsible. ”

VI. INTEREST IN POTENTIAL NEW MALE METHODS

The potential U.S. market for male contraceptives is more than 19 million men.

Overall, almost four in ten men are very interested in potential new methods for male contraception. Among the 38.7 million US men aged 18–49 who have sex with women, whose beliefs don't prevent them from using contraception, who have not had a vasectomy, and who do not want a baby at this time, this interest level rises to almost five in ten, for a potential market of **8.2 million** men. An additional one in three of these men is somewhat interested, adding **5.6 million** potential consumers of male contraceptive methods. Among the segment of men who are generally trying to prevent pregnancy but could accept one at the time they were surveyed, one in three is very interested in the new methods, leading to an additional market segment of **5.4 million** men.

U.S. Male Contraceptive Market Segments and Sizes (MM Men)

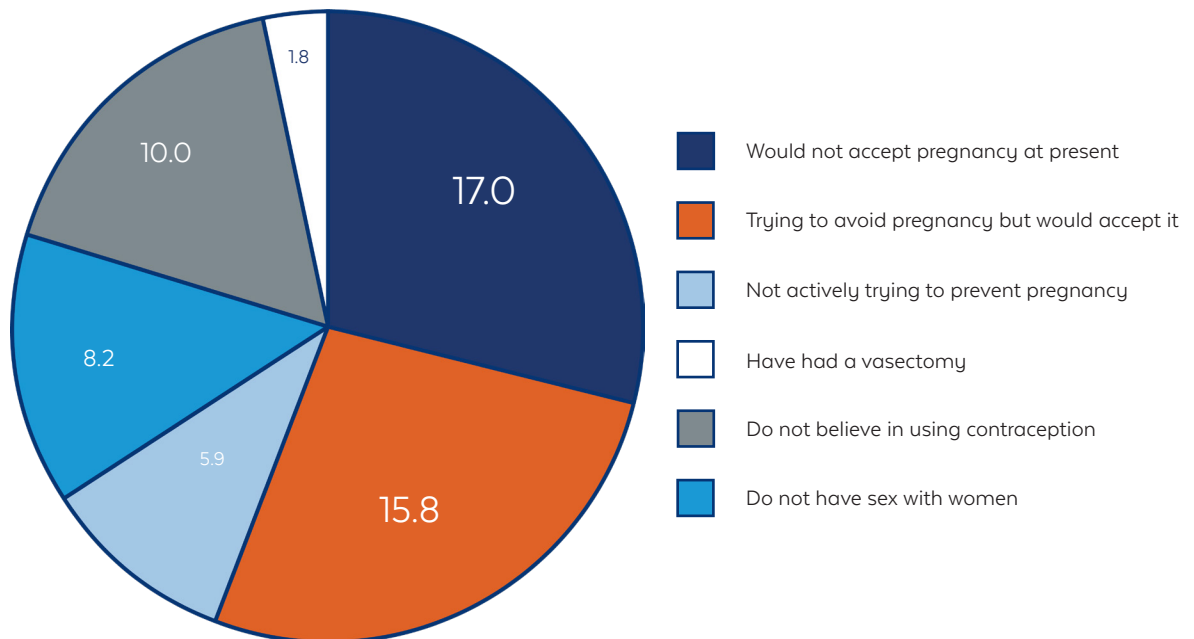


Figure: Market size for male contraceptives and segments.

Source: U.S. Census, men aged 18–44

Note: 3% of men in the study reported that they had a vasectomy. This may be lower than reported in other sources because the study only included men aged 18–44

The target consumer for male contraceptives is easily identified as his interest in potential new male contraceptive methods is directly related to the following:

- **A sense of responsibility for preventing pregnancy.** The more responsible the man feels, the more likely he is to be interested. **Almost nine in ten men (86%) who say that they are solely responsible for preventing pregnancy are very or somewhat interested in potential male methods** compared to 73% of those who say the responsibility is shared and 77% of those who say it is the women's responsibility
- **Frequency of intercourse.** The more frequently a man reports having intercourse, the more likely he is to be interested in male contraception. More than three in four men (77%) who have intercourse more than once a month are very or somewhat interested in potential male methods compared to 60% of men who have intercourse less than monthly
- **Whether he and his partner are currently trying to prevent pregnancy.** **Eight in ten men (81%) who would not accept a pregnancy at the present time are very or somewhat interested in male contraception** as compared to 55% of those who are indifferent to getting pregnant
- **Whether he caused an unplanned pregnancy in the past.** Eight in ten men (82%) who caused an unplanned pregnancy at some time in the past are very or somewhat interested in male contraception as compared to 72% of those who have not caused one
- **His interest in reversibility.** Three in four men (76%) who say reversibility is important are very or somewhat interested in potential new methods compared to 64% of men who say reversibility is not important
- **His satisfaction with current methods.** **Almost nine in ten men (87%) who are dissatisfied with condoms are very or somewhat interested in potential new methods**



Almost nine in ten men dissatisfied with condoms are very or somewhat interested in potential new methods

A need for a high degree of confidence in pregnancy prevention is the most common reason for interest in male contraceptives.

These men believe that they are responsible for contraception, they are dissatisfied with current male and female methods, and they are more likely than average to have caused an unwanted pregnancy in the past. The reasons chosen next most often – by 59% and 44% of men respectively – are “I would be taking responsibility for birth control” and “I don’t feel men have enough contraceptive options.”

Reason for Interest	% Selecting	Characteristics of men very or somewhat interested for this reason
I can be sure that my partner won't get pregnant	70%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am responsible for contraception - Trying to prevent pregnancy at all costs - Caused an unplanned pregnancy - Dissatisfied with female method - Men who use withdrawal - Dissatisfied with withdrawal - Dissatisfied with condoms - People with some college
I would be taking responsibility for birth control	59%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I am responsible for contraception - Aged 30-34 - College graduates
I don't feel men have enough contraception options	44%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In a relationship but not living together - College graduates

Figure: Reasons for interest in new male contraceptive methods



Interest is greatest in taking a pill before intercourse.

More than four in ten men are very interested, and an additional one in three somewhat interested in, a pre-coital birth control pill. Almost as many men are interested in a pill that would be taken regularly, not only prior to having intercourse. Interest in using a topical gel or getting an injection is also moderately high, with more than half of men very or somewhat interested in each option. Men interested in an occasion-based pill, a shot, or implant are likely to have a partner using methods other than The Pill.

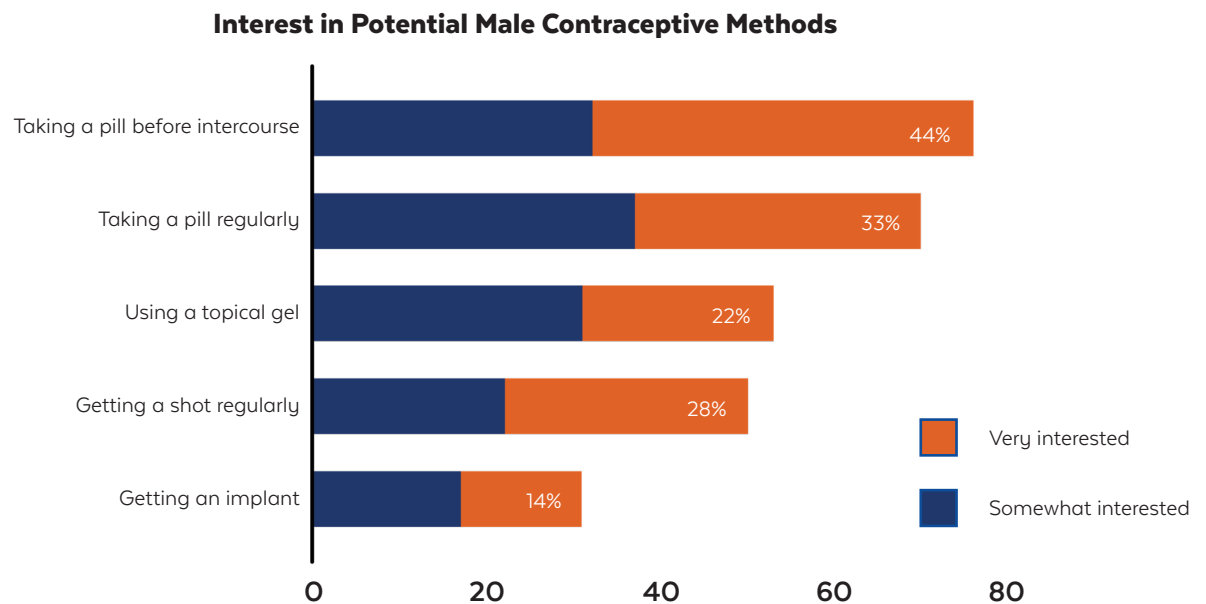


Figure: Level of interest in types of potential new male contraceptives

Consistent with their greater interest in taking a pill immediately before intercourse, four in ten men prefer to wait an hour or less for a male contraceptive to be effective. An additional one in four prefers the method to be effective within a day. Only 4% say they are willing to wait a month or more.

Regarding the time required for a new method to be effective, nine in ten men would like a male contraceptive to be effective within two weeks of starting with four in ten hoping it would be effective within an hour. There may have been some confusion that this question refers to the time needed each time occasion-based method (e.g. a pill or a gel) is used.

Men are quite divided in their reasons for lack of interest in new methods.

The two most common reasons – each mentioned by 35% of men – are satisfaction with their current method and concern about side effects. Comparable numbers of men don't want to use a medical contraceptive or are worried about unknown long term effects. All of these concerns are expressed by half as many men as are interested in potential new male methods.

Reason for Lack of Interest	% Selecting
I am satisfied with the contraception I currently use	35%
I am worried about the side effects of new medical contraceptive methods until they've been available for a few years	35%
I do not want to use a medical contraceptive	32%
I am worried about the long-term effects of new medical contraceptive methods until they've been available for a few years	35%
It would not protect against STDs	14%
Contraception is a woman's responsibility	35%

Figure: Reasons for lack of interest in new male contraceptive methods

The most common reason that men who use condoms are not interested in potential new male methods is satisfaction with condoms, whereas men who use withdrawal are more likely to be worried about side effects and long-term impact of potential medical methods.

Reason for Lack of Interest in New Methods	Use Condoms	Use Withdrawal
Contraception is a woman's responsibility	2%	4%
I am satisfied with the contraception I currently use	59%	34%
It would not protect against STDs	16%	14%
I am worried about the side effects of new medical contraceptive methods until they've been available for a few years	40%	53%
I am worried about the long-term effects of new medical contraceptive methods until they've been available for a few years	36%	48%

Figure: Reasons for lack of interest in potential new male contraceptive methods by type of method currently used



VII. CHARACTERISTICS OF NEW MALE METHODS

Two-thirds of men say that it is very important that male contraception be reversible.

Additionally, one in four men say that reversibility is somewhat important. The man most interested in reversibility is young, says he shares responsibility for conception, has not caused an unplanned pregnancy, and is more highly educated.

How Important is it that Your Contraceptive is Reversible?

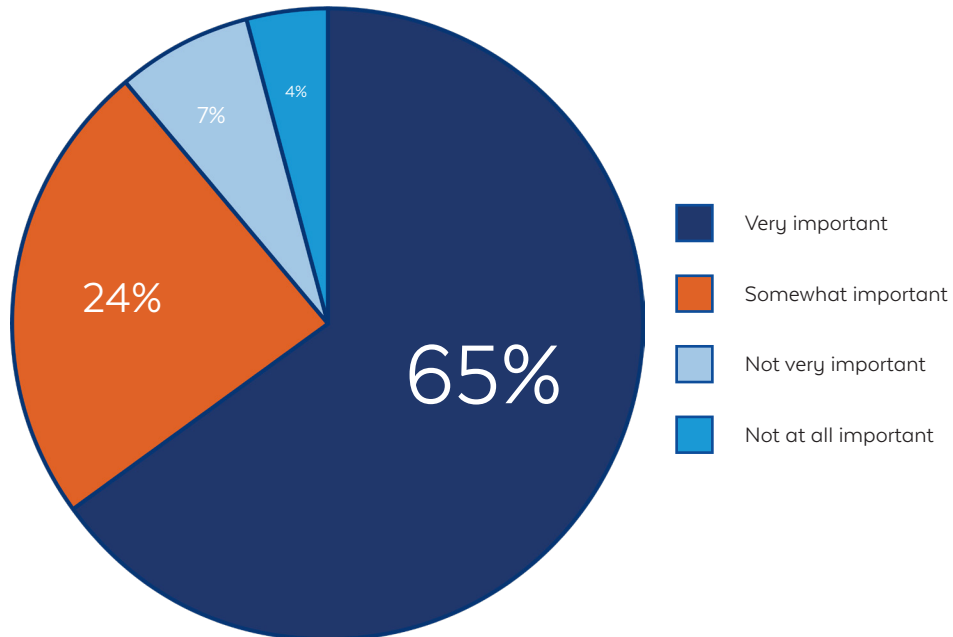


Figure: Importance of reversibility in a male contraceptive



Effectiveness and STD Protection are important factors for new male contraceptive methods.

Given the choice, **half of men would like a male contraceptive that is 99.9% effective**, with the other half saying they would accept a rate of 99%. Six in ten men say that it is very important for a male contraceptive to protect against STDs, and 19% say it is somewhat important. Only two in ten say that it isn't important. Men most concerned about protecting against STDs are young, are not currently in a relationship, and are more likely to currently use condoms.

What chance of pregnancy would you be willing to accept if you used a male contraceptive method?

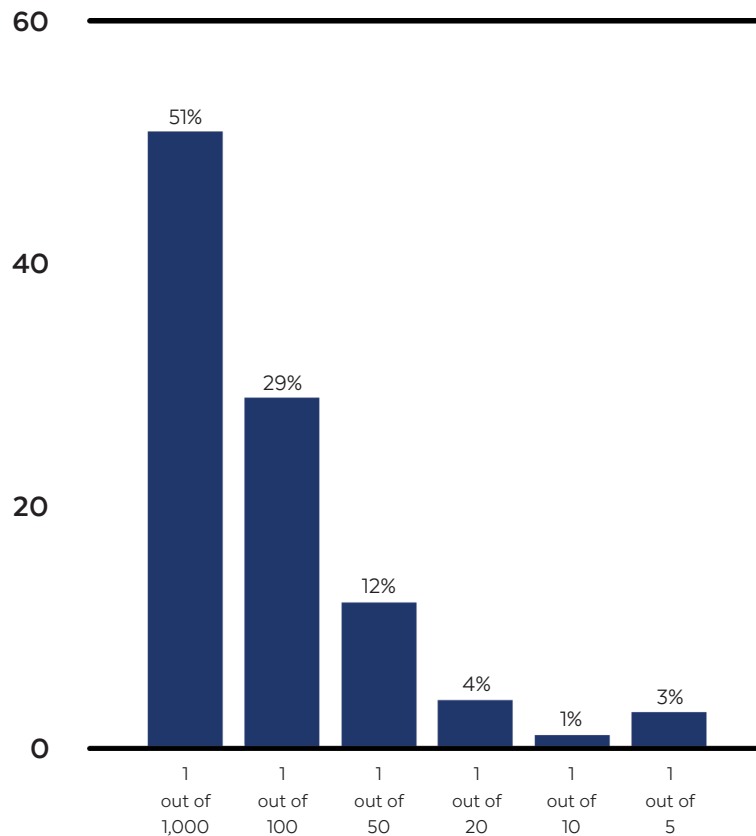


Figure: Acceptable failure rate of a male contraceptive



Men would prefer that the method they use be non-hormonal.

However, one in eight men admits that they do not know the meaning of “hormonal” and “non-hormonal”.

Interest in Hormonal & Non-hormonal Male Contraceptive Methods

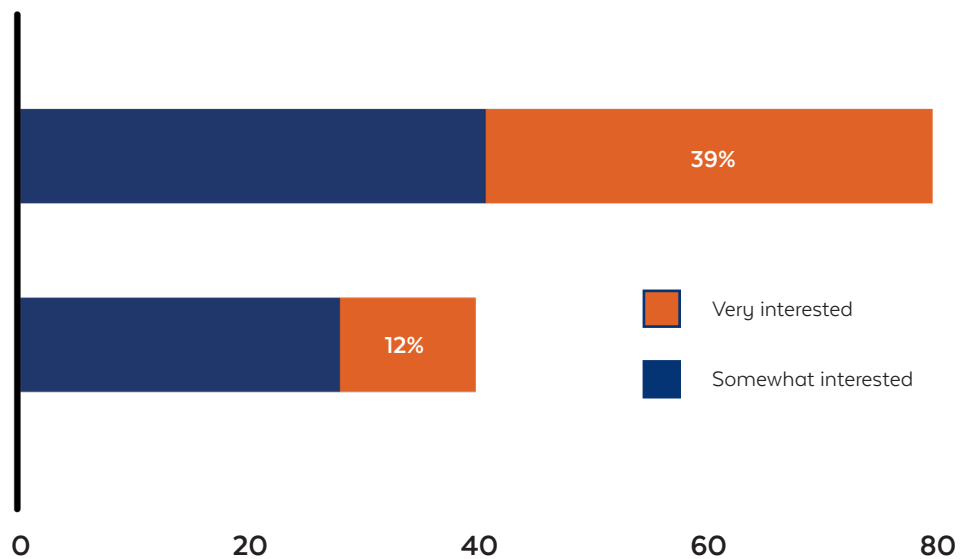


Figure: Interest in hormonal vs. non-hormonal male contraceptive methods

Possible side effects of depression and reduced interest in sex are the biggest concerns about using a new method.

Mood swings and nausea are next least tolerable. Acne is a certain deterrent for almost half of men with an additional 40% wary. Interruption during intercourse and permanent infertility are the greatest deterrents beyond side effects .



“ Reversibility is very important to me.”

VII. CONCLUSION

There is a considerable market opportunity in developing new methods of male contraception.

Despite decades of development, men are limited to only two methods of male contraception – condoms and vasectomies. Neither of these are long-acting reversible methods. This study demonstrates a desire among men for new male methods, and shows that men are eager to take responsibility with their partners in contraception.

Half of the population displays a clear interest in new methods, yet they are bereft of options. Long-acting reversible male methods have the potential to have a measurable impact on the unplanned pregnancy rate¹, and with it, all the societal and economic benefits of reducing unplanned pregnancies².

The man who is interested in new, long-acting male methods of contraception is likely already participating in contraception, either through condom usage or vasectomy, with the latter wishing there were other options at the

time of their procedure. Most men feel responsibility for contraception, and want the ability to participate, especially those men that are dissatisfied with current methods. In whole, only a small fraction of men believe that contraception is the responsibility of women.

As with female contraception, one product is unlikely to meet all needs of all users. However, from these data, we can conclude that **male contraception must, above all else, be comparable to current long-acting female methods in terms of efficacy and reversibility.** Men lack long-acting options with these characteristics, and it stands to reason that these are must-have requirements. Additionally, many men are interested in a pre-intercourse pill with a short time to action. There are currently research projects that could potentially result in a product with such characteristics, but they are early in the development pipeline.

Societal perceptions of side effects as they relate to female hormonal contraception may drive a bias against

¹ Dorman, E., Perry, B., Polis, C. B., Campo-Engelstein, L., Shattuck, D., Hamlin, A., ... Sokal, D. (2018). Modeling the impact of novel male contraceptive methods on reductions in unintended pregnancies in Nigeria, South Africa, and the United States. *Contraception*, 97(1), 62–69. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.contraception.2017.08.015>

² Sonfield, A., Hasstedt, K., Kavanaugh, M., Anderson, R. (2013). *The Social and Economic Benefits of Women's Ability To Determine Whether and When to Have Children*. Guttmacher Institute: https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/report_pdf/social-economic-benefits.pdf

hormonal methods for men. However, types and magnitudes of side effects are largely still to be determined for new male contraceptive methods. Although a sizable portion of men not interested in new methods state concerns about side effects, mitigation of these concerns could result in an even larger potential market for new male contraceptive methods.

Men are ready to share in the responsibility of contraception, and to do so, need methods of their own. With a potential market of over 19 million men in the United States alone, male contraceptive products stand to make a significant impact in the financial and social landscape of contraception.

This study provides insight into why men want male contraceptive options, and the product characteristics they desire. However, further exploration of attitudes and understanding are required, particularly as products move through the development pipeline and their profiles are more well defined.

MCI and others will continue to seek to research, support, and promote public engagement efforts in order to advance product development and foster public demand for a choice-maximized future of male contraception.





About

MCI's mission is to facilitate research & development of male contraceptives for people around the world and to build awareness among researchers, donors and the general public about the demand for and status of novel male contraceptive methods.

Contact

7413 Six Forks Rd, # 257
Raleigh, NC 27615
+1 (984) 464-2951

Online



malecontraceptive.org



[@MaleBCNow](https://twitter.com/MaleBCNow)



facebook.com/malecontraceptive/



[@MaleBCNow](https://www.instagram.com/MaleBCNow)



youtube.com/malecontraceptive/



[@MaleBCNow](https://www.snapchat.com/add/MaleBCNow)

