

MEN WILL BE ABLE TO EXERCISE BIRTH CONTROL

Study shows a new birth control pill for men appears to be **safe**

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Historically, the burden of contraception has always been assumed to be the responsibility of women, but a new experimental pill could be the game-changer.

An overseas study has shown that a new birth control pill for men appears to be safe when used daily for a month, with hormone responses consistent with effective contraception.

The news has spread like wild fire in the US, sparking debate on whether or not the world is really ready for the "male pill".

"In many cultures and communities attitudes towards contraception are evolving: there is a growing sentiment that men should be more involved as far as contraception in a relationship is concerned," local urologist Dr Amir Zarrabi told City Press this week.

Zarrabi said the fact that no safe, reliable and reversible method of male contraception had been available to date, did not make female contraception the "more convenient" choice in most men's minds.

"A fully reversible male contraceptive, which is also reliable and without major side effects, is likely to be a game changer in the field of contraception.

"Unfortunately, we are not there just yet - the new male contraceptive pill is still in very early phases of testing," he said.

Earlier this month researchers from the University of Washington presented their study into the pill - called dimethandrolone undecanoate or DMAU - at the Endocrine Society's 100th annual meeting in Chicago.

The pill combines the activity of an androgen - or rather a male hormone like testosterone - and a progestin and is taken once a day.

A total of 83 men aged between 18 and 50 participated in the study, including giving blood samples, for hormone and cholesterol testing.

"DMAU is a major step forward in the development of a once-daily 'male pill'," the study's senior investigator, professor Stephanie Page said.

"Many men say they would prefer a daily pill as a

reversible contraceptive, rather than long-acting injections or topical gels, which are also in development."

The investigators tested three different doses of DMAU - 100mg, 200mg and 400mg - and two different formulations inside the capsules, castor oil and powder.

At the highest dose of DMAU tested, 400 mg, subjects showed "marked suppression" of levels of their testosterone and two hormones required for sperm production, luteinizing hormone and follicle-stimulating hormone.

The low levels, Page said, were consistent with effective male contraception shown in longer-term studies.

"Despite having low levels of circulating testosterone, very few subjects reported symptoms consistent with testosterone deficiency or excess," Page said.

But all groups taking DMAU did have weight gain and decreases in HDL ("good") cholesterol, both of which Page said were mild.

All subjects passed safety tests, including markers of liver and kidney function.

"These promising results are unprecedented in the development of a prototype male pill," Page said.

"Longer term studies are currently under way to confirm that DMAU taken every day blocks sperm production."

But even with these promising results from DMAU, there still remains the question of whether men would take to it or not.

Zarrabi is a little sceptical. "In my personal opinion the uptake among men will initially be slow.

"A change in mindset will not occur overnight and as we know contraception has been seen as primarily the responsibility of the females for a very long time," he said.

"Some men also see contraception as equivalent to permanent sterilisation and even castration.

"Obviously this is an uninformed opinion but this too will be a barrier to widespread acceptance," he said.

In the meantime, men wanting to take the responsibility of contraception into their own hands still have the option of a vasectomy.

TALK TO US

As a man, how do you feel about being able to control the pregnancy process? Would you use it?

SMS us on 35697 using the keyword CONTROL and tell us how you feel. Please include your name and province. SMSes cost R1.50

HOW IT WORKS

Dimethandrolone undecanoate (DMAU) taken at 400mg daily lowers levels of testosterone and two hormones needed for sperm production.

POSITIVE DEVELOPMENTS:

- No significant mood changes;
- No changes in vital signs;
- No adverse effects noted;
- Nine participants reported decreased libido (eight drug - one placebo), so no significant change in sexual function; and
- Eight participants reported acne (five drug, three placebo) but were resolved by the time the study ended.

NEGATIVE:

- Some men experienced weight gain;
- Levels of the good cholesterol HDL decreased.

KEEPING KIDS SAFE ONLINE

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It's a modern problem: How to protect your children from inappropriate and illicit content on the internet.

Smartphones, iPads and tablet computers are fast becoming must-have items for children as schools increasingly use them to liaise with pupils and their parents for homework and assignments, and to build their technological skills.

Parenting experts say it has become critical to protect children and have some control over their screen time, while also balancing that with good old human interaction.

Nikki Bush, who with tech expert Arthur Goldstuck authored Techsavvy Parenting: A Guide To Raising Safe Children in a Digital World, said: "Children need to have digital literacy in order to navigate the world of work."

"We live in a world where children need high tech skills and high touch skills, where they are as comfortable with face-to-face conversations as they are with making a healthy switch when they need to, to work on their screens."

While she says it is possible to spy on your

children's online activities through the parenting control apps available, it is also important to have a conversation and agreement with your child about what is and isn't allowed, as well as the behaviour and responsibility they must display towards their devices.

"I always say, relationships are the apps money can't buy. You can completely spy on your child, but over time you need to pass over the responsibility to your child to show trust. But as much as children want freedom, they can also make mistakes because they are emotional and hormonal," she said.

A recent study published in the Journal of

Pediatrics titled: Internet Filtering Technology and Aversive Online Experiences in Adolescents, analysing 1 030 interviews with teenagers aged 12 to 15 and their caregivers, lends credence to Bush's advice that moulding good behaviour in your child through building a communicative relationship trumps releasing all parenting control to an app.

The study found that use of internet filtering technology did not reduce the chance of adolescents having aversive online experiences, including exposure to pornographic content, contact from strangers, bullying and sexting.

The study's researchers advocated that caregivers should rather balance their children's internet experiences by developing their characters, educating them and building their resilience to such experiences.

"We're giving children very powerful devices; tools that weren't even available when the first man went on the moon.

"The parent's role is to provide the backdrop of values your family espouses. Just as we taught them how to behave among people and off screen, kids need to be taught how to behave on their devices," Bush said.

TALK TO US
How do you cope with your children's internet needs? Do you use net-blocking apps, or do you talk to them about the dangers?
SMS us on 35697 using the keyword INTERNET and tell us what you think. Please include your name and province. SMSes cost R1.50

APPS THAT HELP



QUSTODIO
This app has been downloaded over 500 000 times since its release in 2013. It allows you, as a parent, to set your child's screen time limits and supervise what they do online. You can also schedule times your children are allowed to use their devices, receive detailed reports of your child's online activities and stop children from accessing harmful videos and sites.



KIDS PLACE
It too restricts which apps your child can access, only allowing access to parent-approved apps. Its time lock feature locks apps after a specified amount of time and its advanced timer controls screen time. It does not need an internet connection to work and can auto restart apps accidentally stopped by toddlers



BOOMERANG
This app blocks inappropriate apps from your child's device and is designed to teach children time management. It too sets daily allowances for apps and games, and once time is up, the apps will be blocked. A cool feature is that it enforces device-free bedtimes by blocking your child's device at night. You can also track and locate your child's whereabouts from your device as a parent, with its location feature.



MMGUARDIAN PARENT
This app makes the disclaimer that it is not about spying on your kids, but about protecting them. As a parent, you're able to track SMSes and block calls from unwanted or unsavoury people. To prevent cyberbullying and sexting, the app filters which websites children can access and manages their screen time. It also blocks certain apps and games.



NET NANNY
This is a custom mobile browser that becomes your child's default browser. It allows parents to manage apps that their children can and cannot use on their mobile devices. It also allows you to set when during the week and for how long your child can browse the internet. The app has a profanity-masking feature which replaces swear words with characters so that webpages with otherwise appropriate content can still be viewed.

SHOWCASE YOUR PRODUCTS AT THE SOUTH AFRICAN NATIONAL PAVILIONS

The Department of Trade and Industry (the dti) will be participating in various exhibitions and trade shows to promote locally manufactured products in international markets.

We invite manufacturers and registered exporters to participate in the international trade shows listed below.

the dti will offer the following financial support to qualifying firms:

- air travel assistance up to R17 000 (SMME and BOE only);
- daily subsistence allowance of R3 000 (SMME and BOE only);
- freight-forwarding of display material; and
- exhibition space and booth rental costs.

Begin date	End date	Exhibition details	Host country	Sector	Website	Closing date for application	Contact person
05-Sep-18	07-Sep-18	Fruit Logistica Asia 2018	Hong Kong, China	Agro-Processing (Fresh Fruits and Vegetables)	www.asiafruitlogistica.com	05-Apr-18	Tshepiso Malunga
08-Sep-18	11-Sep-18	China International Fair for Investment and Trade (CIFIT) 2018	Xiamen, China	Investment	www.chinafair.org.cn	09-Apr-18	Virginia Mbuyisa
11-Sep-18	15-Sep-18	Automechanika Germany 2018	Frankfurt, Germany	Automotive	www.messefrankfurt.com/frankfurt	11-Apr-18	Mayanda Gawula
17-Sep-18	20-Sep-18	World Food Moscow 2018	Mockba, Russia	Agro-Processing	www.world-food.ru	17-Apr-18	Mayanda Gawula
19-Sep-18	23-Sep-18	The Africa Aerospace and Defence (AAD) 2018	Centurion, South Africa	Aerospace, Rail & Marine	www.aadexpo.co.za	21-Apr-18	Virginia Mbuyisa
21-Oct-18	25-Oct-18	SIAL Paris 2018	Paris, France	Agro-Processing	www.sialparis.com	21-May-18	Virginia Mbuyisa
31-Oct-18	04-Nov-18	Havana International Fair (FIHAV) 2018	Havana, Cuba	Multi-Sectoral	www.eventseye.com	31-May-18	Mayanda Gawula
05-Nov-18	10-Nov-18	China International Import Export (CIIE)	Shanghai, China	Multi-Sectoral	www.neccsh.com	05-Jun-18	Mayanda Gawula
13-Nov-18	14-Nov-18	WAPIC 2018	Lagos, Nigeria	Eletrotechnical	www.wapicforum.com	13-Jun-18	Tshepiso Malunga
17-Feb-19	21-Feb-19	IDEX 2019	Abu Dhabi, UAE	Aerospace, Rail & Marine	www.idexuae.ae	17-Sep-18	Tshepiso Malunga
06-Feb-19	09-Feb-19	Fruit Logistica Berlin 2019	Berlin, Germany	Agro-Processing (Fresh Fruits and Vegetables)	www.fruitlogistica.den/en	10-Sep-18	Virginia Mbuyisa
18-Feb-19	22-Feb-19	Gulfood 2019	UAE, Dubai	Agro-Processing (except alcoholic beverages)	www.gulfood.com	18-Sep-18	Virginia Mbuyisa
07-Mar-19	10-Mar-19	Foodex Japan 2019	Chiba, Japan	Agro-Processing	www.3jma.or.jp	08-Oct-18	Mayanda Gawula
15-Mar-19	18-Mar-19	Cosmoprof Bologne 2019	Bologna, Italy	Cosmetics	www.cosmoprof.com	15-Oct-18	Tshepiso Malunga
21-Mar-19	24-Mar-19	Midest 2019	Paris, France	Multi-sectorial - Services: Subcontracting (Metals, Plastics, rubber, composite materials, electronics, wood, Micro techniques)	www.midest.com	19-Oct-18	Tshepiso Malunga

NB: Event dates subject to change

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