

By MARILYN BEYMAN

Family planning has come a long way since the days when a young married couple would ask the doctor, "How many children should we have?"

The speaker, Dr. Jerome Weisberg, Southeastern Michigan State University, in the second of a series of three discussions on woman and health problems sponsored by the Oakland-Livonia Human Service Agency May 12.

Most obstetrician-gynecologists agree the size of families is up to couples, although doctors are more than happy to answer any questions they may have, Weisberg said. "Many children are unplanned and the ideal planning situation isn't common."

Weisberg outlined methods of birth control available. One of the first to be used was the rhythm system, he said, which is based on the woman's menstrual cycle.

"Since the periods of many women aren't exactly time clocks, they would have to keep track of intercourse from the 10th day after menstruation until the 16th or 20th day."

Dr. Weisberg referred to the rubber condom as the most common method used by men in which the male is involved. He maintained the device is very safe and perhaps one out of 100 will be ineffective.

"A CONDOM has its drawbacks as far as aesthetics are concerned," he said. "It takes away much of the romantic enjoyment from sexual intercourse."

The most common method used by women is applying foam, cream or jelly that contains spermicidal and lubricant agents, he said. Weisberg said that the diaphragm is 98 per cent effective, tremendously underrated and somewhat forgotten because of the use of the pill.

The diaphragm is a plastic device (IUD) which is inserted inside the uterus and has no effect on intercourse.

"ON RARE occasions, an IUD can cause an infection of the uterus or cervix," Weisberg said. "If a woman has cervical infection or heavy periods, it's not a good idea for her to use an IUD."

There is also danger of the IUD perforating the wall of the uterus and slipping into the abdominal cavity, he said. When this occurs, a minor operation must be performed.

"SOME WOMEN with unwanted pregnancies try to deceive their doctor by having him insert an IUD when they know they are expecting a baby," Weisberg said. "It's true in such cases the IUD will cause an abortion, but it can also cause some other very serious problems."

Birth control pills are the only contraceptive 100 per cent effective if properly used every day, he explained. The pill can have an effect on a woman's system since it is taken into the stomach and bloodstream, he pointed out.

"Some studies show that the pill is perfectly safe and others say it's five times as dangerous as any other contraceptive," Weisberg claimed. "As clinicians, we're caught in the middle. On rare occasions the pill is believed to have caused cancer or blood clotting."

Dr. Weisberg asserted the contention that the IUD can cause cancer is a myth. Weisberg stressed that the best time to insert an IUD is immediately after menstruation because the cervix is slightly open and there is certainly no woman isn't pregnant.

IN MALE vasectomies, the doctor removes a small segment of each vas that carries sperm, Weisberg explained. The cost of sterilization and vasectomies are about the same, he noted, but sterilization takes effect immediately while the male operation requires a waiting period of weeks or days for the sperm count to drop to zero.

"The decision of which one of a couple should be sterilized is more psychological than financial," Weisberg said. "Often a man will tell his wife she went through labor so he'll have the vasectomy. If he's willing, that's fine. But if the man doesn't want it, it isn't a good idea to try to talk him into a vasectomy because it can result in emotional problems later on."


The object of the three discussions on women's health is to help educate them about their bodies. The final session will be May 19 at Webb Junior High School in Ferndale. The topic will be "Diseases that Affect Women and Menstrual Disorders."

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Richardson said adoption of the latest recommendation brings the road board acceptance of Citizens Research Council suggestions to nearly 70 per cent.

"Implementation of the most important of the 15 recommendations is in the laps of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners at the moment," Richardson said. "That's our proposal that the county board give voters in the November election a chance to vote on a two-mill property tax increase for five years to finance a supplemental, catch-up road improvement program."

The information chart is available now at all Cunningham pharmacy counters

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Road board puts policies in writing

The Oakland County Road Commission has adopted another of the 15 recommendations stemming from the Citizens Research Council of Michigan's year-long management study of the Oakland County Road Commission.

The road board has formally adopted a recommendation that all policies of the board be reduced to writing, formally approved and readily available to members of road commission management for day-to-day guidance. The recommendation also suggested annual review of the written policies to assure uniformity and consistency.

"Actually, we have put the cart before the horse," managing director John L. Grabe told the road commissioners. "You have been adopting written policy for some 18 months now."

"It occurred to us," said road commissioner Richardson, "that we should formally approve a written resolution along this line to be consistent."

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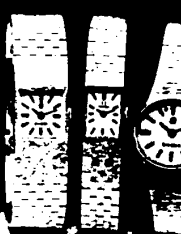
Statistics prepared by the U.S. Commerce Department show the number of reported tornadoes in the United States has risen from 62 in 1953 to 118 in 1973. The total number of tornado-related deaths in Michigan (218) during the same period is second only to Texas.

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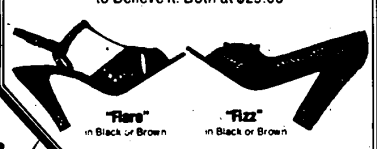
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