

## PREGNANCY TEST OPTIONS COUNSELING IN FAMILY PACT

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### Pregnancy Test Visit: Opportunity for Client Education and Counseling

When clients require a pregnancy test, it is important for staff to view this as an opportunity to provide valuable information that can improve clients' reproductive health and assist them in achieving their family planning goals. Whether the pregnancy test is positive or negative, education and counseling will help clients achieve two public health goals:

1) pregnancies are intended and planned for; and 2) assist in creating healthy families according to their personal family planning goals.

The Family PACT Program includes reimbursable education and counseling visits that can be used to conduct comprehensive pregnancy test options counseling. Read on to learn more about how to provide pregnancy test options counseling that is in accordance with Family PACT Program Standards.

### Improve Your Skills as a Pregnancy Test Counselor--Training Available

For many women, finding out the results of her pregnancy test can be an emotional time. Regardless of whether the pregnancy test is positive or negative, the Family PACT clinic staff providing the pregnancy test results must be both knowledgeable and comfortable in presenting the education and counseling appropriate for the test results.

The Family PACT Program Standards, as found in the Policies, Procedures and Billing Instructions (PPBI) states that:

“All counseling and referral-to-care options appropriate to a positive or negative pregnancy test result must be provided in an unbiased manner, allowing the client full freedom of choice.”

This means that each client receiving a pregnancy test result must be provided with all information appropriate to the test result in order to make an informed choice as follows:

#### Clients with a positive pregnancy test are to receive information on:

- Prenatal care
- Adoption
- Pregnancy termination

#### Clients with a negative pregnancy test are to receive information on:

- Family planning services
- Pre-conception care
- Infertility services

#### Knowledgeable and Comfortable

In addition to being able to provide the client with medically accurate information about her pregnancy test result, you also need to be comfortable discussing these options with her.

Because this is a critical time for a client, it is important that prior to giving a woman her test result you identify and clarify your own values and beliefs about the pregnancy test options that need to be discussed. If you are not in touch with your own feelings, beliefs and biases you could do more harm than good; perhaps even unintentionally pressuring her to make a decision that is not right for her.

By understanding your own values and beliefs, and understanding the role of a pregnancy test options counselor you will be better able to use a client-centered approach during the counseling session.

To help you succeed as a pregnancy test options counselor, Family PACT is hosting Regional Provider Forums entitled 'Pregnancy Test Options Counseling in Family PACT' throughout California:

- Los Angeles: November 12, 2008
- Sacramento: December 2, 2004
- Ontario: February 24, 2009

Go to [www.familypact.org](http://www.familypact.org) for the course registration brochure.

# Helpful Strategies for Conducting a Pregnancy Test Counseling Session

Being knowledgeable and comfortable with the information given in a pregnancy test counseling session is the first step to becoming a successful pregnancy options counselor.

But *how* you deliver the information, and how the session is structured is equally important. Key components to consider include how you:

- Assess the client;
- Respond to the client; and
- Provide the client with information, or referrals as appropriate.

## Assessing the Client

Assessing the client provides the foundation for pregnancy counseling and occurs throughout the session.

- Prior to performing the pregnancy test (or giving the result) ask the client what she hopes the result will be.
- When informing her about her test result, give the client adequate time to respond. Ask her how she feels about her test result.
- At the end of the session, ask the client what she will do to carry out her plan once she leaves your site.

You can ask your client a combination of both closed and open-ended questions. Closed-ended questions are usually answered with a “yes” or “no.”

- “Do you want to be pregnant?”
- “Have you used any method of family planning in the past?”

Open-ended questions produce longer answers and provide more information about the client’s thoughts and feelings.

- “How do you feel about the test result?”
- “Who will you tell first about your pregnancy test result?”
- “What do you plan to do when you leave today?”

## Responding to the Client

Responding to the client’s feelings should happen after assessing how she feels.

While most people will assess how a client is feeling, it is easy to not take the time to respond to her feelings.

Responding to a client’s feelings can make us feel uncomfortable. Yet, it is important to take the time to respond to how the client feels whether it be happy, sad, angry, or even confused. Often, the client cannot take in the information you provide until she has dealt with her feelings.

How can you respond to the client’s feelings? Some common responses are:

- Letting the client talk; just listening
- Validating her feelings – “I can see how that would be hard to handle”
- Giving her tissue
- Waiting in silence until she is ready to talk
- Asking her if she wants you to give her a minute to herself
- Telling her that she is not alone

There are many other possible responses. Different responses are appropriate for different clients or situations. The most important thing is to respond in some way to the client’s feelings before providing information regarding her test result.

## Providing Information to the Client

In order to conduct a successful pregnancy counseling session, the client must be given medically accurate and un-biased information about her options.

The information should be appropriate her test result to enable her to make an informed choice. The first piece of information she will receive is the result of her pregnancy test. Secondly, she will receive information about the options that are available to her.

## Informing a client about her test result

Although the information about positive or negative pregnancy tests may be clear to the staff person who is

giving the results, it is not always clear to the listener, particularly if she is anxious about the test result.

Many times a client is told, “your pregnancy test is positive” or “your test is negative.” Talking about the test result only addresses the test. It does not provide the client information about whether she is pregnant or not pregnant.

If a client has a positive pregnancy test result, you might say, “your test is positive, which means you are pregnant.” For a negative test result, you might say, “your test is negative, which means you are not pregnant right now.”

When informing a client about her test result, it is important to clearly state whether or not she is pregnant.

## Providing accurate information to the client

Once a client has been informed about her pregnancy test result and had expressed her feelings about this result, it is time to provide her with information about her options. The counseling session may focus primarily on the option that the client is most interested in, but she must also receive general information about all of the other options. It is not sufficient to inform a client about only the options that you feel most comfortable discussing.

If the pregnancy test is positive, you will need to give your client information on prenatal care, adoption and pregnancy termination. If the pregnancy test is negative, you will need to provide her with information on family planning, pre-conception care or infertility services.

Be sure to also provide her with written self-care information or referrals as appropriate.

## Tips for Pregnancy Test Counselors

It is important to give the client the necessary information in a way that will help her remember it. You can also evaluate how successfully you have communicated the information by assessing what the client knows at the end of your counseling session. These techniques include:

1. Give information in short explanations.
2. Ask questions to evaluate her understanding and comprehension.
3. Demonstrate any skills you will be asking the client to do.
4. Allow her to demonstrate back to you any skills shown (use of a method, talking with their partner, etc.).
5. Use visual aids such as charts, models, films, etc.
6. Give the client something in writing that reinforces what you have explained verbally
7. Summarize your main points at the end.



## Calendar of Events

*(See [familypact.org](http://familypact.org) or call 1-877-FAMPACT for more information about these events)*

**Provider Orientations:** 8:30 am - 4:30 pm

**December 4, 2008** Provider Orientation & Update Session - San Diego

**Regional Provider Forums:** 9:00 am - 1:00 pm

**Pregnancy Test Options Counseling in Family PACT**

**November 12, 2008** Regional Forum - Los Angeles

**December 2, 2008** Regional Forum - Sacramento

**February 24, 2009** Regional Forum - Ontario

**Special Interest Trainings:** 9:00 am - 3:30 pm

**October 21, 2008** IUC Insertion Training - Santa Barbara

**February 11, 2009** IUC Insertion Training - Berkeley

**Webcast:** 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm

**November 18, 2008** Reversible and Irreversible Long Acting Contraceptives - Anita Nelson, MD

# Health Education Resources

Family PACT makes available multi-lingual, easy-to-read client education materials that can assist you when counseling your client about the results of her pregnancy test. These materials, plus many others, are available for FREE. Browse the entire catalog at [www.familypact.org](http://www.familypact.org). Many materials are also available for download off the website.

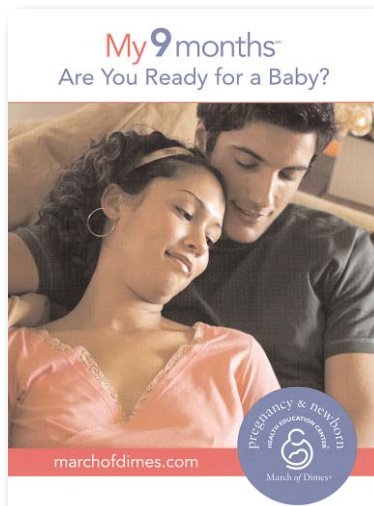
## Birth Control Methods



This 24--page booklet provides your clients with an overview of basic information about each method. It discusses the benefits and risks of each method and compares effectiveness rates. It is intended to help clients narrow down their choices. Written at the 7th grade level, It is available in English and Spanish.



## Preconception and Pregnancy



This easy-to-read booklet helps moms-to-be answer the question, "Are you ready for a baby?" It includes advice on quitting bad habits, taking folic acid and visiting a health care provider. Written at the 5th grade level, it is available in English and Spanish.

## Choosing your Birth Control Method

With the use of full-color pictures and a table format, clients can compare the use, effectiveness, benefits, risks and tips for using 17 different birth control methods. The methods are organized into four major categories: barrier, hormonal, long-term and information-based methods. This 8 1/2" x 14", double-sided flyer also includes information on how to choose a method. Written at a 5th grade reading level, it is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Vietnamese and Russian.

**Choosing Your Birth Control Method**  
Family PACT is here to help.

All these methods are safe for most people to use. Talk with a Family PACT provider about what method is right for you.

All these methods work well. How well they work can depend on you. Some methods work very well no matter what. Some methods work well if you use them the right way every time you have sex. These percentages show how well each method works for most women even if it isn't used exactly the right way every time. If you use your method the right way every time, it will work even better for you!

It's your choice! Think about how the method would fit in with the way you live.

Want to protect yourself from HIV and other sexual diseases? Use condoms for men, condoms for women, or decide not to have sex at all.

Had unprotected sex? You can still prevent pregnancy. Ask your Family PACT provider about EC pills.

Want to find a Family PACT provider near you? Call Family PACT at 1-800-942-1054 or go online at [www.familypact.org](http://www.familypact.org) and click on "Clinics".

Birth Control Method	How you use it	How well it works	Pros	Cons	Helpful Tips
<b>Long Term Methods:</b> All these methods work very well and are safe and easy to use. None of these methods protect against HIV and other sexual diseases.					
IUD	• Health care provider puts it in woman's uterus. • Lasts 5 or 10 years.	99%	• Easy-to-use. • Few side effects.	• Can cause some cramping for a few minutes.	• Check the string every month. • Be sure it is in place.
Tubal Ligation	• Health care provider blocks woman's tubes. • Permanent.	99%	• Never have to think about birth control.	• Can't change your mind.	• Get your signed paperwork done ahead of time.
Vasectomy	• Health care provider blocks the man's tubes. • Permanent.	99%	• Doesn't change your sex life.	• Can't easily change your mind.	• Afterwards, get a sperm count. • Use condoms until then.
<b>Hormonal Methods:</b> All of these methods are for women only and are safe for most women to use. They may cause changes in your period, spotting, bleeding between periods, and other side effects. None will protect you from HIV or other sexual diseases.					
Mini Pill	• Health care provider prescribes it. • Woman puts one pill every day.	92%	• Easy to use. • Prevents cramps and heavy bleeding during periods.	• May have mood changes or other side effects.	• Take the mini pill at the same time every day.
Patch	• Health care provider prescribes it. • Woman puts new patch on each week.	92%	• Easy to use.	• May have tender breasts or other side effects.	• Change the patch on the same day of the week for 3 weeks in a row.
Pill	• Health care provider prescribes it. • Woman takes one pill every day.	92%	• Easy to use. • Prevents cramps and heavy bleeding during periods.	• May have nausea or other side effects.	• Take the pill every day at about the same time.
Ring	• Health care provider prescribes it. • Woman puts new ring in vagina once a month.	92%	• Easy to use.	• May have headaches or other side effects.	• Put in a new ring one week after you take the old ring out.
Shot	• Health care provider gives woman a shot every 3 months.	97%	• Easy to use. • Light periods or no periods at all.	• May be some bone loss. • May have spotting.	• Get a shot every 12 weeks.

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