

2012 Vermont Adult Behavioral Risk Factor Survey

Data Brief – Family Planning

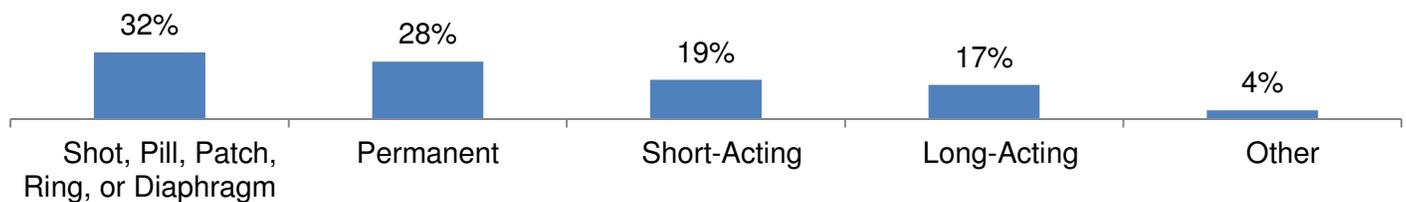
Birth rates have decreased in the United States in recent years, and Vermont's rate is among the lowest with only 9.7 births per 1,000 women ages 15-44 in 2011¹. Vermont women are also older, on average, when they give birth for the first time as compared to U.S. women (26.7 years² vs. 25.6 years¹). Using 2012 Vermont Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) data we can look at the family planning practices and preconception health behaviors of women of childbearing age (18-44).

Family Planning:

Nearly three-quarters (73%) of childbearing aged women said they used birth control during their last sexual encounter. Use of birth control was statistically similar across age groups and levels of income and education.

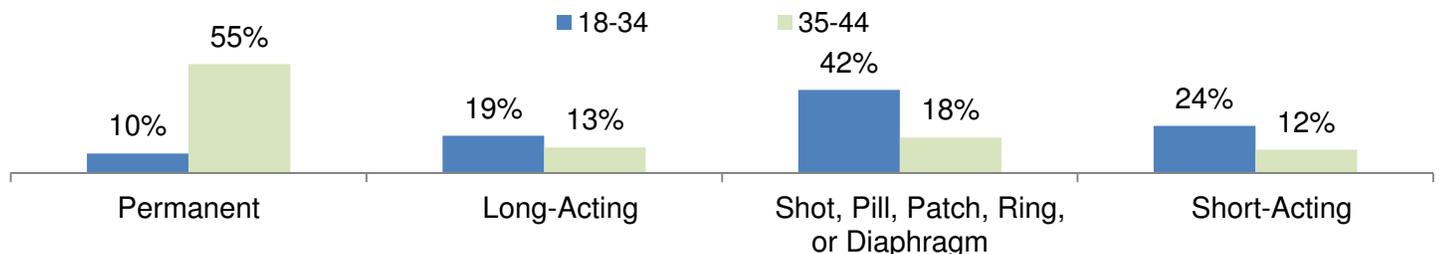
The two most common reasons women reported for not using birth control were inability to get pregnant (40%)³ and seeking pregnancy (28%); 8% didn't think about it/didn't care if they got pregnant. Among women who used birth control, one third (32%) used an injection (shot), oral contraceptive (pill), contraceptive patch or ring, or diaphragm. More than a quarter (28%) used permanent birth control (sterilization); 19% used short-acting birth control, such as a condom, and 17% used a long-acting reversible birth control method such as a contraceptive implant or IUD. An additional four percent said 'other' birth control methods.

Figure 1: Type of birth control used
Women of childbearing age (18-44) who used birth control
in last sexual encounter



Women ages 35-44 were significantly more likely than those 18-34 to have at least one child in their home (81% vs. 51%), as a result it is not surprising that women ages 35-44 were significantly more likely to report use of permanent birth control methods than those 18-34. Conversely, women 18-34 were significantly more likely to report use of short-acting birth control methods as well as a shot, birth control pill, contraceptive patch or ring, or a diaphragm.

Figure 2: Type of birth control used
Women of childbearing age (18-44) who used birth control in last sexual encounter



There were no statistically significant differences in types of birth control use by levels of income and education or health insurance status.

¹Martin JA, Hamilton BE, Ventura SJ, Osterman MJK, and Mathews TJ. Births: Final data for 2011. National Vital Statistics Reports; vol 62 no 1. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics, 2013. (http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr62/nvsr62_01.pdf)

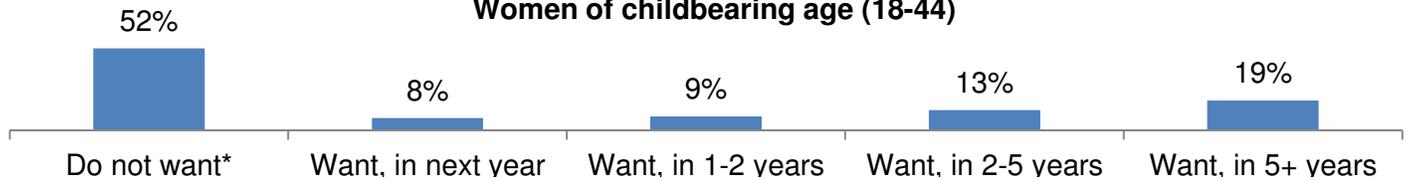
²Vermont Department of Health Vital Statistics System, 2011 Preliminary Data.

³ Includes: self/partner unable to get pregnant, male & female sterilization, hysterectomy, same sex partner, and current pregnancy.

Desire to Have Children in the Future:

In 2012, 62% of Vermont women 18-44 already have at least one child in their home. More than half of women of childbearing age do not want children in the future⁴. An additional one in five said they want children, but five or more years from now. Less than a third (30%) said they want a child in the next five years – 8% in less than 12 months, 9% one year to less than two years from now, and 13% in two to five years' time.

**Figure 3: Want children in the future
Women of childbearing age (18-44)**



*Includes women who stated they do not want children in the future or who use male or female sterilization as their birth control method.

The average age of women who do not want children in the future was 36.3 years; significantly higher than that among those who want children, regardless of their timeline. Conversely, the mean age of women wanting a child at least five years from now was 21.6 years; significantly younger than women wanting children sooner or not at all.

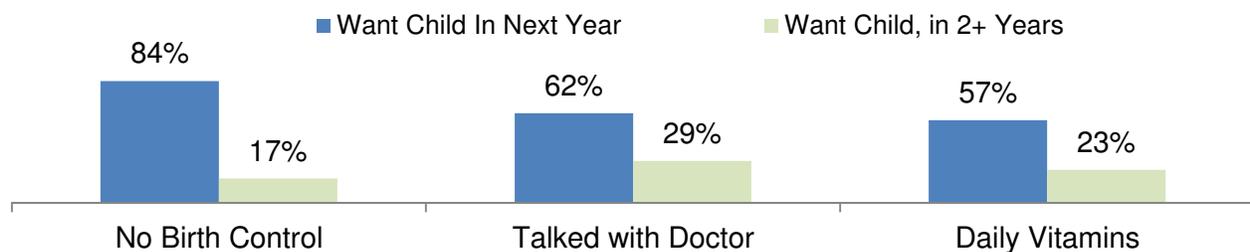
More than three-quarters (80%) of women who do not want children already have children in their home. This proportion is statistically higher than the 58% among women who want a child in the next year, the 48% among women who want a child in the next two years, and the 38% wanting one two or more years in the future.

As might be expected, more than eight in ten (84%) women who want a child soon (in the next year) said they did not use birth control when they last had sex. Conversely, 17% of women wanting a child at least two years from now reported not using birth control, a statistically significant difference.

In 2012, about two-thirds (62%) of women who desire a child soon (in the next year) have ever talked with a health care worker about preparing for a healthy pregnancy and baby. However, this is statistically higher than the 29% among women wanting children at least two years in the future.

More than half (57%) of women wanting a child soon said they take a multi-vitamin, prenatal vitamin or folic acid vitamin daily. An additional 13% said they take one at least once per week, but not daily. Women wanting a child at least two years from now were significantly less likely to report daily intake of vitamins (23%).

**Figure 4: Preconception behaviors
Women of childbearing age (18-44) who want a child**



For more information on the BRFSS or to suggest ideas for future BRFSS Data Briefs, contact Jessie Hammond, M.P.H. (802-863-7663; Jessie.Hammond@state.vt.us).

⁴ This includes women who stated they do not want children in the future or whose birth control method is sterilization (male or female).