

TIPS AND STRATEGIES FOR DISCUSSING CONTRACEPTION WITH POSTPARTUM PATIENTS

OVERVIEW OF YOUR ROLE AS A COMMUNITY HEALTH WORKER WORKING WITH PREGNANT OR POSTPARTUM PEOPLE

You are an *advocate* for *your patient's goals*. Support your patient in their contraceptive journey by creating a safe place for them to reflect on their own personal goals and contraceptive plans, based on the preferences that are most important to them. The aim is to prepare your patient for discussing their contraceptive goals with their health care provider.

For those who do not want to get pregnant immediately after giving birth, your role is to:

- Discuss pregnancy desires and contraceptive needs
- Share information about methods that are safe to use in the postpartum period (immediately after delivery, 6-weeks postpartum, and beyond)
- Explore what your patient wants from their method (*can use the worksheet*)
- Discuss with your patient that there may be medical reasons a method is not recommended for them
- Identify questions, concerns, and priorities that your patient can bring to their conversation with their provider

USE OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS TO ASSESS PREGNANCY DESIRES, CONTRACEPTIVE NEEDS, AND PATIENT PREFERENCES

- *Do you want to get pregnant again right away after giving birth?*
- *Do you want to discuss your birth control options for after the baby is born?*
- *What has been your past experience with birth control?*
- *What do you want from your birth control?*
- *There are methods you use each time you have sex. Others you use once a day, once a week, once a month, or even less frequently. Is this something that matters to you?*
- *There are methods with and without hormones. Is this something that matters to you?*
- *Do you want a method you can start and stop on your own?*
- *Is getting a period every month important to you?*
- *What methods would you like to learn more about?*
- *If your preferred method is not safe to use until 6-weeks postpartum, do you want to pick another method to use for the first 6-weeks?*
- *Do you want to think about using two methods together to increase efficacy or prevent STIs?*
- *What has been your experience discussing birth control with a health care provider in the past?*

RESPECT AND HONOR YOUR PATIENT'S EXPERIENCES AND CONCERNS

- Center your patient's preferences when discussing options — only they know what matters most to them
- Acknowledge concerns your patient raises about a method and encourage them to speak to a health care provider
- Do not push for a specific method or that a patient must use contraception
- Remain non-judgmental

REMEMBER

- Coordinate with your team so that your patient does not get asked about their contraceptive plan multiple times by multiple staff (it can feel like coercion!)
- Remind your patient that they can always revisit the topic at a future visit with you or their health care provider — contraceptive use is a lifelong journey and they should never feel pressured to select a method or keep using a method they do not like
- It is okay if your patient does not want to make a contraception plan...even if they want to avoid pregnancy

