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**Coverage**  
Great Britain  
**Theme**  
Health and Care

## One fifth of women have been tested for Chlamydia Contraception and sexual health 2005/06

One fifth (20 per cent) of women aged 16-49 had undergone a test for Chlamydia at some point in the past, of whom 27 per cent had done so in the previous year, according to a new report published by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Awareness of Chlamydia is increasing. The proportion of people who recognised that it is a sexually transmitted infection (STI) has increased sharply since the question was first asked in the 2000/01 survey – from 35 per cent to 79 per cent of men and from 65 per cent to 91 per cent for women.

Young women were most likely to have had a test for Chlamydia (31 per cent of 16-29 year-olds had been tested in the past compared with 20 per cent of 30-39 year olds and 11 per cent of 40-49 year olds.).

Women who had had more than one sexual partner in the past year were also more likely to have had a test (43 per cent compared with 20 per cent of those who had had just one partner).

Those who knew Chlamydia was an STI were asked five questions about the symptoms. Women were twice as likely as men to give correct responses to all questions (38 per cent compared to 18 per cent).

This report presents the results of a survey on contraception and sexual health carried out by the ONS in 2005/06 on behalf of the Information Centre for health and social care. Questions were addressed to women aged 16-49 and men aged 16-69.

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## **Contraceptive use in women aged under 50**

The majority (74 per cent) of women aged under 50 were using contraception. The most popular method was the contraceptive pill (24 per cent) followed by the male condom (21 per cent) - both methods were more popular among younger women.

Ten per cent of women under 50 had been sterilised (18 per cent of men under 70 had undergone a vasectomy). Sterilisation was more common among women with no qualifications than among those with qualifications.

Twenty-six per cent of women under 50 were not currently using a method of contraception (14 per cent were not in a sexual relationship with someone of the opposite sex).

Among women in a heterosexual relationship, the main reason that women did not use contraception was because their partner had been sterilised (55 per cent). The next most common reason was actual or planned pregnancy (21 per cent).

## **Emergency contraception**

Condom failure was most common reason why hormonal emergency contraception (the morning after pill) was used (45 per cent) followed by forgetting to take the oral contraceptive pill (22 per cent).

Five per cent of women had used emergency hormonal contraception in the year before interview. Of these women, 45 per cent had obtained it directly from a chemist or pharmacy, 30 per cent from their own GP or practice nurse and 24 per cent from a family planning clinic.

## **Condom use**

Forty-one per cent of men and 46 per cent of women said they had used a condom in the previous year. Condom use was most common among men who had had more than one sexual partner in the past year and among those with degree level qualifications.



Ninety per cent of women who used a condom said the reason was to prevent pregnancy and 43 per cent cited preventing infection, compared with 88 per cent and 47 per cent of men respectively. (People could give more than one reason).

### **Sexual behaviour**

Sixteen per cent of men aged under 70 had had no sexual partners in the previous year, 73 per cent had had just one partner and 12 per cent had had more than one.

Twelve per cent of women aged under 50 had had no sexual partners in the previous year, 81 per cent had had just one partner and seven per cent had had more than one.

### **Knowledge of sexually transmitted infections**

Just over half of men and women reported making no changes to their behaviour as a result of what they had heard about HIV/AIDS and other STIs. However, 37 per cent said they had increased their use of condoms, nine per cent had fewer one night stands and three per cent had a test for STIs.

Television programmes were the most commonly mentioned source of information about STIs (32 per cent), followed by television advertisements (21 per cent) and newspapers, magazines or books (21 per cent).

### **Background Notes**

1. Details of the policy governing the release of new data are available from the press office.
2. **National Statistics** are produced to high professional standards set out in the National Statistics Code of Practice. They undergo regular quality assurance reviews to ensure that they meet customer needs. They are produced free from any political interference. © Crown copyright 2006.