



Take This Quiz to Test Your Knowledge of Women's Health

*True-false quizzes are sprinkled throughout the new edition of **Our Bodies, Ourselves** under the heading "Myth or Reality?" Try this sample to see how much you know about women's health. (Answers follow.)*

Myth or Reality?

- 1) Taking the Pill can make you want sex less often.
- 2) Drinking cranberry juice helps prevent urinary tract infections.
- 3) Smoking "light" or low-tar cigarettes reduces risk of smoking-related illness.
- 4) Breast cancer rates have stabilized in recent years.
- 5) Cesarean section rates in the United States are abnormally high compared to other countries.
- 6) Most women who are raped are attacked by a stranger.
- 7) You can get a sexually transmitted infection through oral sex.
- 8) Most women get pregnant within two or three months of trying.
- 9) Many women don't have orgasms during intercourse with a man.
- 10) Women are more biologically vulnerable to environmental toxins than men.

Answers

- 1) **Reality.** Some birth control pills suppress the usual cyclical nature of our hormones and may affect our desire. Some of us may have less desire, reach orgasm less easily, and experience vaginal dryness. Some women feel depressed while on the Pill, and that can reduce interest in sex.
- 2) **Reality.** Unsweetened cranberry juice makes your urine more acidic, and prevents bacteria from sticking to lining of your bladder, so you may be less likely to get a UTI.
- 3) **Myth.** A study released by the National Cancer Institute in 2001 found that "light" and low-tar cigarette brands are no less harmful than other brands and do not reduce a smoker's health risks.
- 4) **Myth.** In actuality, the rate at which new cancers are diagnosed has increased more than 40% since the early 1970s. Rates continue to rise in the United States and internationally.

- 5) **Reality.** Today, 26% of all U.S. babies are born by cesarean section, a rate that is much higher than in other industrialized countries. In the 1960s, the U.S. cesarean rate was 5%. There are many reasons for today's high cesarean rate, including the under-use of care that enhances the natural progress of labor and birth; the tendency by doctors to practice "defensive medicine" because they fear being sued; and the wide use of medical interventions, such as induction of labor and epidurals, which might necessitate a cesarean.
- 6) **Myth.** Research shows that the majority of women who are raped knew their assailant.
- 7) **Reality.** Oral sex involves exchange of bodily fluids, which can transmit infections. Using a dental dam when your partner performs oral sex on you, or you perform oral sex on a woman, can prevent transmission of bodily fluids. Using a condom is the best protection when you perform oral sex on a man.
- 8) **Myth.** It can take several months for a woman or couple without any fertility problems to achieve pregnancy, particularly if you have recently stopped taking hormonal contraceptives. Physicians define infertility as the inability to get pregnant after a year or more of well-timed, unprotected vaginal intercourse or insemination.
- 9) **Reality.** To reach orgasm during vagina-to-penis intercourse, many of us need direct and sometimes prolonged clitoral stimulation both before and during intercourse. Many of us do not reach orgasm during intercourse at all; this is perfectly normal.
- 10) **Reality.** Research indicates that women, with as much as 10 percent more body fat than men on average, are able to store more fat-soluble toxic materials. These toxins have been tentatively linked to breast cancer and endometriosis.

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For more information, contact: Ellen Silberman 212-698-7076 or

ellen.silberman@simonandschuster.com.