



**Tomorrow's Rx**

More contraceptive options mean you may have years of stress-free sex ahead.

# The future of birth control

Exciting new reasons to look forward to sex **By Marissa Conrad**

**Y**ou may soon be able to choose from an implant, a vaccine or even—dare we hope?—a male version of the Pill men would be responsible for taking. Check out this lineup of revolutionary pregnancy preventers.

**AROUND THE CORNER** A progestin-only implant that's 99 percent effective, called Implanon, may be available by the end of the year. Like Norplant (which was discontinued in 2002), Implanon is placed in the upper arm via a small incision but is only one rod (not six) and works for up to three years. Users may have a bit of tenderness at the incision site as well as a tiny scar. Breakthrough bleeding can also occur for some. After your doctor takes it out, periods should be back on track within a month.

**IN THE NEAR FUTURE** The FDA may approve Lybrel, a daily low-dose pill, as early as 2007. It works much like the already available Seasonale, but instead of having four periods a year as is the case with Seasonale, women taking Lybrel will have no periods at all. In those who have

PMS, studies found the contraceptive reduced symptoms by 85 percent after three months. But about half of users also reported spotting. Women who stop taking Lybrel can expect periods to return within three months.

**DOWN THE ROAD** Scientists at West Virginia School of Medicine in Morgantown have developed a shot that creates antibodies to sperm. Women still ovulate and get a period as usual, but sperm won't be able to fertilize the egg. In preliminary studies on female mice, the vaccine triggered 10 months of temporary infertility in 70 percent of them. Human trials should begin within the next five years, researchers say.

**IN YOUR DREAMS** A pill *he* can take? Someday, maybe. Researchers at the University of Kansas at Lawrence are working with a chemical compound called gamendazole that may one day be used to make one. So far, the ingredient has proved to be 100 percent effective in causing infertility in male mice—but it also caused permanent sterility 43 percent of the time. For now, keep matters in your own (stroller-free) hands; talk to your doc about the best available option for you.