



Dear SELF Participant,  
Happy Spring!

We are still analyzing data from all phases of SELF, and look forward to sharing results! In the next few years as we are able to add in data for Follow-Ups 2 and 3, we will be working to identify what factors might prevent new fibroid development and what factors are associated with shrinkage or slower growth of already existing fibroids. Our aim is to find ways to help you and other women reduce the health burdens of fibroids.

We will continue to send regular study update mailings (3 times per year), that include SELF findings. Please call us at 1-877-692-SELF (7353) or send an email to [info@DetroitSELF.org](mailto:info@DetroitSELF.org) if your contact information changes, so that you will not miss these important updates.

In this newsletter, our health article provides a brief history of birth control, and the reported hormonal birth control use by SELF women. We also include exciting study updates of SELF's extension conducted by Henry Ford, a fun SELF word search, and a look to Spring fashion.

Thank you for being part of SELF.

Sincerely,

Dr. Donna Baird  
SELF Principal Investigator

### **Tell Us about yourSELF**

We would love to hear your story! We can all learn from the experiences of others. Your personal testimony may help encourage participants to remain active with SELF in an effort to learn how to prevent fibroids. Visit the SELF website, and click on the "Share Your Story" tab to share, and for an opportunity to be featured in future newsletters!

### **Study Update**

As of April 2019:

- 520 participants have now completed all Follow-Up 4 activities.
- 1530 (90%) participants completed all Follow-Up 3 activities.
  - 96 participants that missed Follow-Up 2 returned to complete Follow-Up 3.
  - 34 participants that missed both Follow-Up 1 & 2 returned to complete Follow-Up 3.

### **Reminders**

- Let us know if any contact information changes for you or **your secondary contacts**.

### **Newsletter Suggestions?**

- We want to hear from you! What would you like to see in future SELF newsletters? Submit your ideas and suggestions to [info@DetroitSELF.org](mailto:info@DetroitSELF.org)

### **Any Questions?**

Call us at  
**1-877-692-SELF (7353)**  
or send an email to  
[questions@DetroitSELF.org](mailto:questions@DetroitSELF.org)



## Birth Control: A Long History—Still Contentious?



Condoms go back over 5000 years, using fish bladders, linen sheaths, and animal intestines. The first spermicides date back to more than 500 years ago when they were used with condoms. In the United States, the first book devoted to birth control practices was written by Dr. Charles Knowlton in 1838, but such a topic was unacceptable to many. The publication led to Knowlton's prosecution for obscenity and resulted in a conviction followed by 3 months hard labor. Despite this, the book was reprinted both in the US and Britain, and it has been credited with popularizing the topic in both places. Legal battles continued. In 1873 congress passed the Comstock Act which prohibited advertisements, information, and distribution of birth control. Despite the ban, diaphragms (womb veils) were growing in popularity. Margaret Sanger opened the first US birth-control clinic in 1916, but the illegality

of such practices remained. She too was prosecuted and jailed (though not silenced). The Comstock era ended in 1938 in a court case involving Sanger. Sanger remained an active advocate throughout her life. In her 80s, she provided the critical push for the first hormonal birth control, raising money for the research to develop the pill. It was approved by the FDA in 1960. However, in many states it was legal only for married women. It was not until 1972 that legalization was expanded to unmarried women throughout the US. From the late 1990s there has been a rapid expansion of birth control options for women. However, controversy continues. A federally funded program that provides family planning options to low income women has just this March had a shift in its regulations. The requirement to provide "medically approved" family planning options in these clinics (i.e., prescription contraception) has been repealed. There will, no doubt, be court cases, but safe and effective birth control may again become more difficult for many women to access.

<https://www.guttmacher.org/article/2019/03/what-trump-administrations-final-regulatory-changes-mean-title-x/>

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/men-dont-have-reversible-contraceptive-iud-soon-they-could-180962089/>

<https://www.ourbodiesourselves.org/book-excerpts/health-article/a-brief-history-of-birth-control/>

## What SELF Participants Reported about Hormonal Birth Control Use

When women were enrolled in SELF, 86% reported having used a hormonal contraception at some point in their lives. On average, women began using hormonal contraceptives about 6 years after their first menstrual period. Overall, the pill was the most popular method (81% of hormonal contraceptive users), followed by Depo-Provera shots (49%), patch (21%), ring (16%), Mirena IUD (12%), mini-pill (4%), and implant (3%). Other than for contraception, menstrual problems (irregular cycles, heavy bleeding, and pain) were the most common reasons for using these hormonal medications, with 46% indicating such reasons. In fact, 7% reported using the contraceptives only for these problems, not for birth control. For many SELF participants, availability of these medications is not only a family-planning need, but also a medical need.

Hoffman SR, et al., *Patterns of hormonal contraceptive use in a cohort of young, African-American women.* In review for *Contraception*.

## What's Currently Happening on SELF...

Henry Ford Health System was granted an opportunity to continue SELF! We are still inviting participants back for their Follow-Up 4 visit!

Keep an eye on your postal mail for a letter inviting you to come back for your Follow-Up 4 visit. If you have any changes in your contact information (phone number, address, email address), give us a call at 1-877-692-SELF (7353) or email us at [info@detroitself.org](mailto:info@detroitself.org).



suit set with shorts



nude lipstick

## Spring Into Fashion

The SELF Study team have selected a few must-have items that are on trend for the 2019 Spring season. Create and style your own look by combining several different trends together, or wear them separately!



square toe sandals

## WORD SEARCH

CLINIC	MENSTRUAL
DETROIT	SELF
ENVIRONMENT	STUDY
FIBROIDS	ULTRASOUND
FOLLOWUP	VISIT
HENRYFORD	WOMEN
LIFESTYLE	

F T H T L L O P F J P Y S V A  
W X I E V I S I T F D E C M F  
J O L O N R B V R U W A I T O  
D O M J R R G L T Q H G N R T  
Z O Z E O T Y S H Y F D I Q T  
M L Z I N N E F Q D N O L G B  
E G D J K E H D O U X N C Y W  
N S R Z O M E J O R C W T R T  
S Q L T A N H S I R D U Q L J  
T Z R X L O A P U W O L L O F  
R N Y S L R Y D A V K Z Y Z H  
U Q N E T I Z J K H M S Y B J  
A U V L O V L I F E S T Y L E  
L Q U F P N Q O P L J U B T R  
Q G Y X U E O A Y C Q Z N X X



**SELF**

4505 Emperor Blvd.  
Suite 400  
Durham, NC 27703

FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
DURHAM, NC  
PERMIT NO. 509

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

## *I have not been contacted to participate in Follow-Up 4. Am I eligible?*



Yes, you are eligible! We are contacting participants in batches, and will contact you when it is your time to schedule. Please give us a call if your mailing address and/or phone number has changed. Thank you for your continued participation in SELF!

### **LET'S STAY IN TOUCH!**

Please call us at 1-877-692-SELF (7353) if your phone numbers, mailing address or email address changes.



National Institute of  
Environmental Health Sciences



RECOVERY.GOV



Social &  
Scientific  
Systems, Inc.



## **What SELF Participants are saying...**

- » The process from start to finish with the SELF study has been excellent. Each visit, the staff have been very professional, helpful and knowledgeable about the study processes and concerned with any questions I may have while participating in the study.
- » Very professional staff.
- » Very nice and thorough staff.
- » I was able to complete online activities at my own pace at home.
- » I was most satisfied with being able to complete the survey online in the comfort of my own home.

***Thanks for the kudos!***