

DeKalb County Health Department  
Family Planning Program

## **Being a Family Planning Client**

## BEING A FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM CLIENT

Being here means that you have made some hard decisions and taken some steps to decrease your risk of unintended pregnancy. That is part of being an active, responsible participant in your own health and that's great. In order for you to continue your active, responsible role, this information about the Family Planning Program should be helpful.

For our younger clients, the Family Planning Program supports family involvement by encouraging teens to involve their parents and/or families in their decisions regarding their sexuality. By law, however, teens in Illinois have the right to give consent for their reproductive health care. All contacts with the Family Planning Program are completely confidential: information or records will only be released to others with your written consent, except when necessary to provide other services, or as required by law, with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality.

**The Medical Component of the Family Planning Program** provides women with routine gynecological exams so that they can use a birth control method of their choice. This is a limited medical service. Our clinical time is limited to two or three days per week on average. These are the only times we have clinicians available to perform exams. If you need to be seen for diagnosis and evaluation of a health concern or problem, we want to talk with you to determine whether we can help you. If not, we will refer you to an outside physician. We recognize that medical care by a private physician can be expensive. Unfortunately we cannot be of very much help in that situation.

In summary: Do consult us if you have a health concern or problem, but know that we may refer you to an outside private physician.

**Waiting:** The average time it takes for a medical visit is 1 ½ to 2 hours. We know that sometimes clients are here for a long time, and we thank you for your patience. Remember that if we take extra time for someone having a problem or questions, we would also take extra time for you.

**Exam Day:** The exam will be most accurate if you do not douche within 48 hours prior to your exam, and if you do not have intercourse the night or morning before your exam. If you have menstrual flow on your exam day, you can keep your appointment (unless it is to check on vaginal symptoms). Depending on your flow, we may be able to do a complete exam, or we may schedule you to return for the Pap smear.

**Billing:** Our services are offered on a sliding fee scale to those without insurance. Payment at time of service is appreciated. However, if you have concerns or difficulties regarding payments, please discuss them with our staff. If you have insurance or receive Public Aid, including Kid Care or Illinois Healthy Women please bring verification to every visit.

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**Making Appointments:** Appointments for exams do fill up quickly and it could take 4-6 weeks to get an appointment, please plan ahead so there does not have to be an interruption in your birth control use. Appointments to see a Nurse for other reasons (examples: blood work, method education or pregnancy testing and counseling) are usually available the week you call.

**Contraceptive Supplies:** Please call for an appointment. Occasionally our program is closed so do not wait until you are out of supplies always plan ahead. We do have a limited number of evening supply appointments; please ask if needed.

**Telephone Calls:** We realize that it can be difficult to reach our staff by phone because we are often busy with other clients. If you have tried unsuccessfully to reach us, you can leave your name, phone number and times you will be at the number on our voice mail or with the receptionist. We always return phone calls as soon as possible, usually within 24 hours. Because of confidentiality, we do not identify ourselves to anybody other than the caller unless advised differently when you leave your message. Your phone caller ID will identify us as DeKalb County Health Department.

**Tardiness:** It is difficult for us to accommodate clients who are late for appointments because our schedules are very full. If you think you might be late, call before coming to make sure we can still see you. If you are more than 15 minutes late, we may have to reschedule your appointment.

**Emergency Contraceptives (EC's):** (sometimes called the morning after pill) is available and can prevent pregnancy after sex. A woman has up to 120 hours after unprotected sex to take emergency contraceptives. We will provide in advance of need; if you are interested be sure to ask. Persons 17 years of age or older can purchase EC's at pharmacies with photo identification.

We commend you for taking responsibility for your reproductive health that includes efforts to prevent unintended pregnancy and other health problems. We rely on your feedback to assure that our services allow you to carry out this responsibility.

\*A Final Note: Sometimes people have mixed feelings about coming to the Family Planning Program. It's not always easy to admit openly to yourself and others that you are choosing to engage in sexual activity. Mixed feelings about one's sexuality and sexual behavior are not uncommon. Please discuss your feelings with our staff. We are not here just to give out birth control we're here to help people make decisions and choices about their sexuality, including their sexual behavior. We will not judge your feelings or behavior.