

# CONCEPTION AND CONTRACEPTION

## Age range:

14+, Years 10 +, KS 3, KS 4

## Programmes to

use with: Ben, Nat and  
Baby Jack

## Topics covered:

Conception, contraception

Time: 40-60 minutes

## Equipment Needed:

Copies of the 'Conception  
and Contraception' factsheet  
(Included in this document).  
A clear space to work in.

## Learning Outcomes

- Young people have increased knowledge of the physical, legal, emotional and financial implications of having a child.
- Young people have increased knowledge of relevant and appropriate services that can offer help or support to young people around parenting, pregnancy and contraception. E.g. BRASH, Brook

The key concepts for PSHE education in personal wellbeing for Ben, Nat and Baby Jack are:

- personal identities
- healthy lifestyles
- risk
- relationships

An exercise to recap on learners' knowledge of conception and contraception.

## Introduction

This exercise uses creative thinking and team working to consolidate learner's knowledge of how pregnancy occurs and how it can be prevented.

## Exercise

Write the word 'Pregnancy' on the board and ask the group for their first thoughts when they see or hear that word. Explore attitudes to the word, images or facts. Briefly explore the basics of how pregnancy happens.

Split the learners into groups and hand each group one of the handouts on 'Conception and Contraception' on the next page.

Give the groups time to digest the information and discuss the sheets.

In pairs, ask the group to take it in turns to try and explain conception and contraception in their own words. Afterwards give each other feedback on how factually correct they were and how clear the explanation was.

Explain to the group that you want them to find a very simple way of explaining conception and contraception to someone who had no idea what it was about.

Ask the group to create a short talk or draw a comic strip or short scene of drama that shows how conception works.

It may be useful here to have some basic ground rules in terms of what is appropriate for the classroom. Other fun ways to do this is that they have to explain the concepts to an alien who has very limited knowledge of English or humans. Alternatively you could ask them to think about how they would explain conception to their younger brother or sister or to a group of year seven students.

## Summary

Show or look at some of the material the group have produced and sum up on the key facts around conception and contraception the group have learned.

# CONCEPTION AND CONTRACEPTION

## CONCEPTION

Conception is the process of becoming pregnant. Conception happens when a man's *sperm* fertilises a woman's *egg*.

Most women *ovulate* each month, this is when an egg is released by the *ovaries*. For women with a 28-day menstrual cycle, ovulation typically occurs on day 14.

During intercourse the man will *ejaculate* and sperm will be passed from the *testicles* via the penis into the woman's *vagina* and then beyond into the woman's *uterus* (or *womb*).

During a male ejaculation, there are anywhere between 60 million and 500 million *sperm* that take part in the big race to reach the egg. Most of these sperm will die on their journey. Only about 100 to 200 of the sperm will arrive at the *fallopian tubes* which connect the woman's *uterus* to the egg. Only if a sperm reaches the egg can fertilisation happen.

If an egg is not fertilised then it starts to break up and dies and is released through the woman's body. This is what makes up a woman's 'period' each month.

Once one sperm is successful and penetrates the egg then the sperm will lose its tail and its head will increase in size. This entrance creates an 'activation' in the egg and it too begins to enlarge. If the sperm fuses with the egg then the egg becomes fertilised.

If the egg has been fertilised it will move to the uterus and attach itself to the uterine lining, a process called implantation. The cells are called a *zygote*. The cells will begin to divide which will lead to the development of an *embryo* and hopefully produce a baby in nine months time!

A simple game of genetics will determine the sex of the baby. Every man and woman constitutes 22 pairs of chromosomes plus one pair that is the difference between them; these are the sexual chromosomes X and Y. Men have the chromosomes pairing of XY and women have the pairing of XX.

## CONTRACEPTION

Contraception is any method that prevents the process of becoming pregnant. 'Contra' comes from the latin word for against. So contraception just means anything that works 'against' conception.

There are many forms of contraception and they work in different ways but all are about preventing the sperm from fertilising the egg. Some like the condom and femidom, block the way so the sperm can't get through. These are known as 'barrier' methods of contraception. Others work by preventing the body from ovulating or releasing eggs or by stopping sperm from surviving in the uterus.