

## Male contraceptive breakthrough? 'Birth control gel' ready for couples study

The creators of a male birth control gel designed to inhibit sperm production—while maintaining healthy testosterone levels in the bloodstream—will soon start recruiting 420 couples from around the world to enroll in a new clinical trial. Male participants will apply the hormonal gel to both shoulders once a day. Then, after lab testing indicates their sperm counts have been suppressed to extremely low levels (which could take two to three months), the couples will be tracked for a year while they use the gel as their lone form of contraception.

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[O]ptions for male birth control are few—condoms, vasectomy and withdrawal—and there is no equivalent of “the Pill,” a hormonal contraceptive used by women, that would limit sperm production. Yet vasectomy requires surgery and is not always reversible, condoms are often used inconsistently and withdrawal is unreliable. That’s why the NIH team has turned to its new experimental gel. It introduces into the bloodstream a combination of the hormones progestin—which suppresses sperm creation in the body—and testosterone.

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[A] small number of men reported acne, increased appetite, decreased libido, mood swings, headaches or insomnia—side effects also seen among women who take oral contraception.

**The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [A New Push for the Male “Pill”](#)**