

Birth control pill approved for over-the-counter sale with no age restriction, available early next year

Federal regulators on [July 13] approved the nation's first over-the-counter birth control pill in a landmark decision that will soon allow American women and girls to obtain contraceptive medication as easily as they buy aspirin and eyedrops.

The Food and Drug Administration cleared [once-a-day Opill](#) to be sold without a prescription, making it the first such medication to be moved out from behind the pharmacy counter. The manufacturer, Ireland-based Perrigo, won't start shipping the pill until early next year, and there will be no age restrictions on sales.

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Medical societies and women's health groups have [pushed for wider access](#) for decades, noting that an estimated 45% of the 6 million annual pregnancies in the U.S. are unintended. Teens and girls, women of color and those with low incomes report greater hurdles in getting prescriptions and picking them up.

The challenges can include paying for a doctor's visit, getting time off from work and finding child care.

"This is really a transformation in access to contraceptive care," said Kelly Blanchard, president of Ibis Reproductive Health, a nonprofit group that supported the approval. "Hopefully this will help people overcome those barriers that exist now."

[This is an excerpt. Read the original post here](#)