

FDA Encourages 15-Year-Olds to Have Unprotected Sex

The Food and Drug Administration on Tuesday decided to make Plan B available over-the-counter to girls as young as 15 years old.

Anna Higgins, Family Research Council's director of the Center for Human Dignity, says the decision shows an alarming lack of concern for the safety of young girls, the fundamental rights of parents and concerns of the medical community.

"The effects of taking a high dose of a systematically absorbed hormone during puberty are unknown," she explains. "There have been no studies on the drug's effect on young girls. OTC sales could encourage repeat use, which is unsafe. There is no good reason to believe that young girls understand that this drug is designed to be used only once per month and is not a substitute for oral contraception."

As Higgins sees it, over-the-counter availability of Plan B for teens distances those girls at highest risk for sexual abuse and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) from the medical supervision they need. If Plan B is available OTC, teens and women will avoid necessary medical screenings during which serious medical problems like STIs would be detected and treated, she says. Higgins also points to a 2010 study out of the U.K. that shows the increased availability of Plan B to teens was followed by a spike in STI rates among that age group.

"Additionally, this decision undermines the right of parents to make important health decisions for their young daughters. Parents have every right to be involved in any health decisions that affect their children," Higgins notes. "No parent wants his or her daughter exposed to a potentially

dangerous medication without their consent. Instead of allowing unfettered access to potentially dangerous drugs to teens, parent-teen communication regarding the medical and moral issues involved with sexual behavior should be encouraged."