Thirty-three percent of women currently using a less effective birth control method (like condoms alone) and 28% of women using no method said they were very or somewhat likely to start using the pill if it were available OTC. Characteristics of women who reported being likely to use an OTC OCP include younger age, being divorced, widowed or separated, being unmarried and living with a partner, having private insurance or no insurance at all, and living in the southern US.

Women currently using OCPs had more than six times higher odds of reporting being likely to use an OTC OCP compared to participants using another hormonal method or an IUD. Additionally, participants who reported using a less effective birth control method or no method at all had significantly higher odds of saying they were likely to use an OTC pill.

This study also gathered data on women’s perspectives of the advantages and disadvantages of OTC availability of an OCP. Most participants thought OTC access would improve the convenience and ease of obtaining birth control, save time and money, and make staying on birth control and preventing pregnancy easier. However, the majority of respondents also expressed concerns that women might not obtain their regular cervical cancer screening or might choose the wrong pill to use, and half of women were concerned that insurance might not cover an OTC OCP.

Of the participants who indicated they were likely to use an OTC pill, the most women reported being willing to pay per month was $20 on average.

In February 2013, the Department of Health and Human Services clarified that OTC contraceptives approved by the US Food and Drug Administration must be covered without co-pays or deductibles by new private insurance plans under the Affordable Care Act. However, a woman must have a prescription to have the OTC method covered.