



Civic Lab: Your Body, Your Rights

What does your identity have to do with your access to health care services? How do race, class, disability status, and gender all play into birth control or having a baby?

Conversation Questions

1. How does using the word “reproductive” shape the way we talk about bodies and rights?
2. What are ways that our bodies are affected by societal norms and laws? How does the idea of justice come into it?

Key Definitions

- **Bodily autonomy** - Concept that individuals have the right to control what does and does not happen to our bodies. (From [Positive Women's Network](#))
- **Informed consent** - The right to help decide what medical care to receive. By law, health care providers must explain health conditions and treatment choices. (Adapted from [MedlinePlus Encyclopedia](#))

Core Resources

[“The History of Abortion Law in the United States”](#) from *Our Bodies, Ourselves*

This book excerpt summarizes the changes in abortion law throughout US history.

[“G: Unfit”](#) from *Radiolab*

In the 1927 case *Buck vs Bell*, the Supreme Court authorized the sterilization of people without their consent. Episode guests who discuss this history and legacy include a victim of forced sterilization and a parent with intellectual disabilities.

Listen

[“Tampons: That Bloody Sales Tax”](#) from *Planet Money*

In this podcast episode, Stacey Vanek Smith and Constanza Gallardo discuss taxes on menstrual products and the burdens that purchasing necessary supplies can place on people living in poverty.





[“What Happens When Young People Can't Access Reproductive Health Care?”](#) from *The Dose*

Lois Quam, CEO of a nonprofit dedicated to providing access to reproductive health care, recounts stories of how reproductive health care, or lack thereof, has impacted the lives of young people around the world.

[“How Reproductive Justice Is Part of an Anti-Racist Agenda”](#) from *At Liberty*

Renee Bracey Sherman, the founder and executive director of We Testify, and host Mia Jacobs discuss access to reproductive health services through the lens of anti-racism.

Watch

[“The History of Birth Control”](#) from *Time*

This video offers a short summary of the history of birth control, from crocodile dung to the modern birth control pill.

[“How Do Homeless Women Cope with Their Periods?”](#) from *Bustle*

In this “NSFWomen” video, homeless women explain how they handle menstrual hygiene with limited resources.

Read

[“ICE is accused of sterilizing detainees. That echoes the U.S.’s long history of forced sterilization.”](#) from *The Washington Post*

In this news analysis, Steven Moore discusses his research into different attitudes towards forced sterilization, including why some people believe it is the moral choice in some situations.

[“For Trans Men Seeking Reproductive Health Care, There Are Barriers Every Step of the Way”](#) from *Rewire News Group*

In this article, trans men describe some of the obstacles they’ve faced in seeking necessary health care.

[“Affirming Disability Rights in Sexual and Reproductive Health Care”](#) from *International Women’s Health Coalition*

Disability rights advocates discuss the ongoing issues people with disabilities face in maintaining their rights to make their own informed decisions about their sexual and reproductive health.

