Women mentioned contraceptive motives for condom use more often than men, for two reasons. First, single women used the method less frequently than single men: Sixty percent of women who used condoms were cohabiting, compared with only 39% of men. Furthermore, women in cohabiting relationships were more likely to give contraceptive motives for condom use than were men. Second, women who were cohabiting were less likely than were cohabiting men to refer to STD prevention as their main motive (9% vs. 19%); women who lived alone also mentioned this reason less often than did single men (84% vs. 92%).

Overall, in 1994, contraceptive motives appear to have driven the majority of condom use in France (including among married and single men), despite the fact that pregnancy prevention was not included as a topic in any of the educational campaigns about condoms.

**Condom Use at First Intercourse**

In 1970, the majority of people who had first sexual intercourse did not use a contraceptive method (Figure 2). During the 1970s and the 1980s, the percentage of women who did not use birth control at first intercourse began to decline, from 60% in 1970 to 30% in 1987. Since 1987, this decline has accelerated, and the proportion reached 16% in 1993. In the 1970s and the 1980s, the pill became the contraceptive choice of young people and was adopted before first intercourse by nearly one-half of women.19

After 1988, condom use at first intercourse increased substantially, from 8% in 1987 to 45% in 1993, as AIDS educational campaigns focused on preventing sexual transmission of the disease. A combination of pill and condom use was uncommon at first intercourse (5%), and the increase in the percentage of women who used condoms at first intercourse was associated with stagnation in the trend in pill use at first intercourse.

By 1994, condoms were the most frequently used contraceptive method at first intercourse. A 1994 adolescent sexual behavior survey revealed that condom use at first intercourse might be even higher than we estimate here. In that survey, 74% of young women and 79% of young men aged 15–18 reported that they had used condoms at first intercourse.20

Men reported more often than women that their first intercourse was unprotected (Figure 2), and their partners’ level of pill use was lower than that reported by women at first intercourse. (Men probably underestimated pill use, however, since oral contraceptives are a female-controlled method and not directly linked to sexual intercourse.) During the 1970s and

*Respondents were asked: “In the past year, did you use condoms during sexual intercourse?” Those who answered yes were then asked: “Was it to avoid a pregnancy, to protect yourself against sexually transmitted diseases or AIDS, for both reason together or don’t know?”