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# Campus Women



## Would You Consider Taking an Experimental Drug?

Birth control pills can be said to be an experimental method of birth control. Although it was approved by the FDA (The Food and Drug Administration) in 1960 it was done so with inadequate testing or studies. The pill caused a great amount of excitement among many people. The medical and scientific communities saw it as a large step forward, women were excited because it seemed so much better than the existing birth control methods. But was/is it really better? The birth control pill comes with many side effects and many regulations as to who the pill is safe for. The birth control pill can contribute to death. If you don't have regular check-ups with a doctor, if it was prescribed without an adequate examination, or if you ignore signs of complications, you could be gambling with your life.

**Heart attacks and strokes:** There is a higher risk of death due to circulatory disease among women who are or have taken the pill. The chances of death increases the longer you take the pill and persists if you have taken the pill for 5 years or longer (even after you've stopped taking it).

**High blood pressure:** Women on the pill can develop hypertension and this puts them at a greater risk for heart attacks and strokes. Women who have high blood pressure or a family history of it are encouraged to use other forms of birth control.

**Cancer:** There may be connections between the pill and certain forms of cancer. If a woman has cervical dysplasia (abnormal cells in the cervix) the pill might cause it to become cancerous, there is a disagreement between researchers about whether or not there is a connection between skin cancer and the pill and breast cancer and the pill. In these cases what is not known can hurt or even kill you!

**Children:** There have been reports of birth defects among babies whose mothers took the pill while pregnant. Jaundice may occur in babies born to women who took the pill before becoming pregnant and the effects on a child if he/she has accidentally swallowed birth control pills is unknown.

**Headaches:** Migraine headaches may be a warning sign of an impending stroke. Migraines result from problems in the circulation of blood to the brain.

**Diabetes:** In some women the pill can cause or bring about diabetes.

**Depression:** Aprox. 1 in 4 women suffer from depression, anxiousness, or irritability while on the pill. A pill with less progestin or vitamin B6 supplement may help.

**Vaginitis or Vaginal Discharge:** Because the pill causes changes in the vaginal environment increases conditions for infections to take place.

**Skin problems:** The pill may be associated with different skin problems like eczema, hives or rashes and in some rare cases chloasma (changes in skin pigmentation). A progestin pill can increase oily skin and an estrogenic pill may decrease acne.

**Urinary tract infection:** Some reports show that women who are taking the pill tend to have more infections of the bladder and urethra.

**Liver and Gallbladder disease:** The pill had been associated with gallbladder disease and liver tumours. Jaundice can be an early symptom and so at the first sign of Jaundice stop taking your pill.

**Epilepsy and Asthma:** The pill can cause epilepsy but it can also aggravate already existing epilepsy and asthma. A lower dosage of estrogen pills and close medical supervision is a good idea.