

## Title:

The Birth Control Pill & The Breast Cancer Connection

## Word Count:

509

## Summary:

There is only one drug in the world so well known that it's called "the Pill." For more than forty years, more people have taken "the Pill" than any other prescribed medicine in the world.

Sex, pregnancy, and contraception have been hot topics for millennia. It wasn't until the U.S. government approved the birth control pill in 1960 that possibilities for contraception changed dramatically. The majority of women -- and plenty of men -- welcomed "the Pill".

## Keywords:

breast,cancer,hormones,women,health,medical,hrt,saliva,testing,estrogen

## Article Body:

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Sex, pregnancy, and contraception have been hot topics for millennia. It wasn't until the U.S. government approved the birth control pill in 1960 that possibilities for contraception changed dramatically. The majority of women -- and plenty of men -- welcomed "the Pill".

The birth control pill was the first medication ever designed for purely social, rather than therapeutic purposes. At the height of the drugs popularity, U.S. Senate hearings focused the nations attention on potentially deadly health risks posed by the high-dose Pill. As a result of the hearings, pharmaceutical companies lowered the dosages and doctors advised women who were obese, smoked, had high blood pressure or a family history of blood clots against taking the Pill.

In the 1980s, the high dosage 10-milligram pill was removed from the market and biphasic and triphasic oral contraceptives were introduced. Today, women can get a prescription for a Pill containing 1 milligram of progestins, one tenth of the original dose, and containing as little as 20 micrograms of estrogen.

From the very beginning, a significant number of women complained of discomfort from the Pill and switched to other methods. When women wanted to discuss the side effects with their doctors, they often met with frustration. It was common for their complaints to be dismissed as exaggerated. In other cases their ailments were just considered the price that women had to pay in return for such an effective contraceptive. The problem was compounded by that fact that female patients were not always informed about the potential for strokes, heart attacks or blood clots while on the Pill. For the most part sharing "the Pills" risk has become a part of the information provided by health care practitioners who prescribe the Pill.

Today, the safety of the Pill is assumed. However, it is important to remember that the pill contains identical hormones to those found in Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT). HRT has come under question because of the Women's Health Initiative Study showing an increase in breast cancer and heart disease for those women who were on HRT.

In October 20, 2004 headlines read "Birth Control Pill Cuts Cancer, Heart Disease Risk: Study - A new study, yet to be published, suggests women who use oral contraceptives have lower risks of heart disease, stroke, and cancer."

This study has now been denied as accurate by the WHI. Analyses by the WHI have made it clear that the recent findings were not correct?

The low dose pill today although deemed to be safe has never undergone a large government-funded study similar to the WHI study on HRT. According to Dr. John R. Lee in his book "What Your Doctor May Not Tell You About Breast Cancer" women up to age 21 who use the Pill increase their lifetime risk of Breast Cancer by 600%. Caution when considering the use of Birth Control Pill should still be used.