



Christian Voices for Life
Weekly Pro-Life
Education
Prayer
Action

Contraception in Teens can Lead to Adult Depression



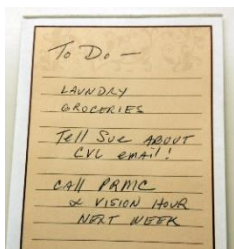
Education: Depression is a burden felt by about 17.3 million U. S. adults, and is the leading cause for disability. (1) It is more prevalent in women than men, and can mean increased fatigue, headaches, irritability, and difficulty sleeping. (2) Recent studies have shown that hormonal contraceptives affect the brain, particularly in teens, since teenage brains are still developing.(3) A large study in Denmark looked at over a million women, excluding those with prior history of depression. IUDs, as well as the pill, the patch and the ring were associated with increased risk of depression. Adolescents who used combined hormone contraceptives had an 80% increase in first use of an anti-depressant, while women in general using that form of contraceptive had only a 23% increase. (4) Women who used hormonal contraceptives currently or recently had triple the risk of suicide compared to women who had never used contraceptives, with the risk associated with IUDs greater than that for the pill. (5)

It has been know for decades that birth control pills increase the risk of blood clots and breast cancer. (3, 4) In spite of this knowledge, however, most doctors kept prescribing it, either because they considered the benefits greater than the risks, or perhaps because they were reluctant to be seen as trying to remove the pill from women. The research on the effects on the brain is more recent, and less likely to be seen in journals followed by family doctors.

1. <https://www.dbsalliance.org/education/depression/statistics/>
2. <https://www.healthline.com/health/depression#symptoms>
3. Sharma et al, "Use of the birth control pill affects stress reactivity and brain structure and function", *Hormones and Behavior*, Vol. 124, August 2020, 104783.
4. <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/2552796>
5. <https://time.com/5030447/birth-control-side-effects-suicide/>
6. *NEJM* 2001; 345:1787-93
7. *Cancer Epidemiol Biomarkers Prev* 2009;18(4):1157-6



Prayer: Please, Lord, help all women to understand the significant risks of hormonal contraceptives, to both their physical and mental health. Help all doctors who prescribe these drugs be aware of the risks and be diligent in warning their patients. Help them to consider refusing to prescribe these drugs and be able to offer fertility-awareness based methods of family planning as an alternative for married women, and encourage abstinence for their unmarried patients, particularly teens. May all young women come to know and follow your beautiful plan for sexuality.



Action: If you know parents who are arranging for their teen daughters to use oral contraceptives, warn them about the serious health risks involved. Encourage them that their daughters can choose abstinence, especially if they truly understand all the reasons to delay sex. Help is available for parents to assist them in encouraging abstinence and protecting their children from sexual harm. [Download](#) our "Resource List for Parents to Protect Your Children from Sexual Harm." The list also includes resources for help to protect younger children from sexual abuse, and to warn them about the dangers of pornography.