

Ovary removal might raise odds for bone loss, heart disease

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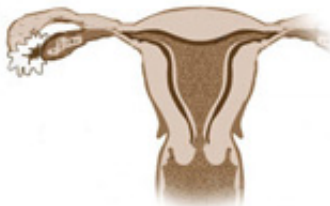


Illustration courtesy: U.S. National Cancer Institute

Doctors should assess overall risks in premenopausal women, study suggests.

(HealthDay)—Older women who had their ovaries removed before menopause are at increased risk for bone loss and cardiovascular disease, according to a new study.

Researchers looked at 222 healthy postmenopausal women in the Los Angeles area. Among women who were more than 10 years past [menopause](#), the rate of [bone mineral density](#) loss was twice as high in those who'd had their [ovaries](#) removed before menopause than in those who still had their ovaries.

The women without ovaries also had more evidence of hardening of the arteries, according to the study published Feb. 14 in the journal *Fertility and Sterility*.

The researchers at the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine noted that the bone-thinning disease osteoporosis and [cardiovascular disease](#) are common conditions in women as they grow older, particularly after menopause.

Decreasing levels of hormones affect the severity of both health issues. While hormone levels gradually fall through menopause, they can decline suddenly if a woman's ovaries are removed.

"Most women in the United States having a hysterectomy have their ovaries removed as well as their uterus, even those who do not have increased risk of breast or ovarian cancer," Dr. Rebecca Sokol, acting president of the American Society for Reproductive Medicine, said in a society news release. "As we learn more about the protective effects the ovaries may exert on bone and cardiovascular health after menopause, this practice could be reconsidered."

Sokol said a physician's careful analysis of a woman's individual risks for cancer, as well as for [bone loss](#), heart disease and stroke, could help her decide whether ovary removal is the best course.

More information: The NYU Langone Medical Center has more about [ovary removal](#).

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