

# Women who take the pill protected from some cancers for up to thirty years

March 22 2017, by Wendy Davidson

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Credit: University of Aberdeen

Women who have taken the oral contraceptive pill are protected from some types of cancer for as long as thirty years according to new research from The University of Aberdeen.

The results showed that having ever used the pill, women are less likely to have colorectal [cancer](#), [endometrial cancer](#) or [ovarian cancer](#) than women who had never used the pill.

The longest-running study in the world into the effects of taking the contraceptive pill published its latest findings in the *American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology*.

The study also looked at the risk of all types of cancer in women who have taken the pill. Results showed that using the pill during their reproductive years does not produce new cancer risks later in life – the time when more cancers occur.

Established by the Royal College of General Practitioners' in 1968, the Oral Contraception Study has the primary aim of investigating the long-term health effects of oral contraceptives.

These latest findings, led by Dr Lisa Iversen, relate to 46,000 women, followed for up to 44 years, creating more than 1.2 million woman-years of observation.

Dr Lisa Iversen, Research Fellow in the Institute of Applied Health Sciences at the University said: "Because the study has been going for such a long time we are able to look at the very long term effects, if there are any, associated with the pill.

"What we found from looking at up to 44 years' worth of data, was that having ever used the pill, women are less likely to get colorectal, endometrial and ovarian cancer.

"So the protective benefits from using the pill during their reproductive years are lasting for at least 30 years after women have stopped using the pill.

"We were also interested in what the overall balance of all-types of cancer is amongst women who have used the pill as they enter the later stages of their life. We did not find any evidence of new cancer risks appearing later in life as [women](#) get older.

"These results from the longest-running study in the world into oral contraceptive use are reassuring. Specifically, [pill](#) users don't have an overall increased risk of cancer over their lifetime and that the protective effects of some specific cancers last for at least 30 years. "

Provided by University of Aberdeen

Citation: Women who take the pill protected from some cancers for up to thirty years (2017, March 22) retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2017-03-women-pill-cancers-years.html>

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