

# Birth Control Pill Linked to Hardening of the Arteries

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BELGIUM, April 8, 2008 - Researchers at the University of Ghent, conducting a long-term study on 1,300 healthy women aged 35 to 55 living in a small town in Belgium, have observed that those women who take oral contraceptives **may have more plaque (a hard, fatty deposit) buildup in their arteries.**

Atherosclerotic plaque is comprised of cholesterol, bacteria and calcium which adheres to the inner lining of arteries.

Approximately 81 percent of participants had taken birth control pills for at least a year at some point in their lives, and 27 percent were currently taking the contraceptives.

The researchers conducted ultrasound examinations of the participants' leg and neck arteries to measure levels of plaque buildup. Every 10 years of oral contraceptive use was correlated with a 20 to 30 percent increase in plaque buildup.

According to lead researcher Ernst Rietzschel, this amount of plaque buildup is cause for **concern because of increased risk of heart disease and stroke, and the study indicates a need to conduct new investigation into the safety of oral contraceptives.**

"It's incredible that a drug which has been taken by 80 percent of women ... is almost bereft of any long-term outcome safety data," Rietzschel said in a NaturalNews report.

Birth control pills are taken by about 100 million women worldwide. Previous studies have shown that **synthetic hormones used for birth control greatly increased the risk of blood clotting.** This new Belgian study adds the increased risk of atherosclerotic plaque formation, in relatively young women, to the risk of clot formation. Clots typically form in the legs and can cause serious injury and death if they travel to the heart, lungs or brain.

Two years ago, pharmaceutical giant **Johnson and Johnson, recalled the Ortho Evra birth-control patch after lawsuits revealed definitive proof that women on the patch were dying of strokes and blot clots three times more frequently than the general population.**

The lawsuits charged that Johnson and Johnson failed to properly investigate the product's safety and stated that the company deceived the public about the severity of potential side effects, which include strokes and severe blood clots.

FDA records show that seventeen patch users between the ages of 17 and 30 suffered fatal heart attacks, blood clots and possible strokes between August 2002 and November 2005.

**Women have previously been considered much less likely than men to have strokes or heart attacks due to cholesterol build-up in their arteries. However, women on the pill approach the level of risk of men for plaque formation, according to this study.**

The link between chemical birth control and breast cancer, though widely studied, documented and published in medical journals, is still ignored by the major media and as a result women taking oral contraceptives seem to be largely unaware of the risks.

Dr. Andrew Penman, CEO of the Cancer Council of NSW (New South Wales, Australia), said that although he still believed the risk of breast cancer in women younger than 50 was minimal, most women were unaware of the possible risks of taking the pill.

"The problem with the pill is that it is such a money spinner that the money gets in the way of the risks," Dr. Penman said.

Read previous LifeSiteNews.com articles on harmful effects of oral contraceptives:

**New Study Shows Double Cervical Cancer Risk for Oral Contraceptive Users**

<http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2007/nov/07111406.html>

Canadian MP says Cancer Society Withholding Pill/Cancer Link

<http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2006/mar/06031707.html>

43 More Women Sue over Birth Control Patch Dangers

<http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2006/nov/06110206.html>

Woman Sues "Birth Control" Patch Manufacturer for Pulmonary Embolism

<http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2005/sep/05091303.html>

Abortion-Causing Birth Control Patch Manufacturer Faces Class-Action Lawsuit

<http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2005/jul/05072703.html>

18 Year-Old New York Student Dies Suddenly from Birth Control Complications

<http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2004/apr/04040606.html>

URL: <http://www.lifesitenews.com/ldn/2008/apr/08040807.html>