



SCIENCE Hormonal contraceptives found to increase risk of breast cancer

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A large study published in the [New England Journal of Medicine](#), reports an elevated risk of breast cancer associated with all forms hormonal birth control. This may sound like old news to some, but there was hope that low estrogen-containing pills and newer forms of contraception, such as the IUD, would prove safer. Researchers believed the potential risk of breast cancer would be lowered.

Well, unfortunately not. Why wouldn't pumping your body full of hormones have negative effects?

This study followed nearly 1.8 million women in Denmark taking all forms of hormonal contraception for 11 years. It was confirmed that these women ran an overall **20% increased risk**, lasting for about 5 years after they discontinued the use of hormonal contraception.

Those using contraceptives for longer and over the age of 40, were found to have a greater risk. Among women taking the pill for 5 years, this study suggests there would be one extra case for every 1500 women – a relatively small but significant result.

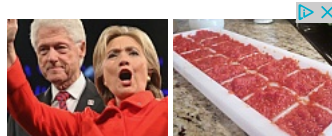
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Are most women aware of the risks they are taking when it comes to birth control? Anyone considering hormonal contraception should be made aware of potential risks so that they can make an informed decision. Although these updated findings may sound scary, there are also significant benefits to birth control as well.

numerous unwanted side effects - as there are no better alternatives. Or are there? What are the alternatives?

If you are one of these women that suffer the consequences daily, there may be an effective alternative; an App called **Natural cycles**. This incorporates the old-fashioned rhythm method, turned digital. It gives you the knowledge and power to really get to know your body and understand how your cycle works; enabling you to have more sexual freedom whilst also remaining protected.

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How does it work?

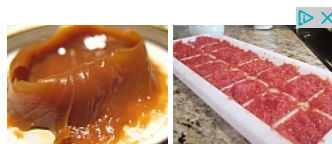
It's pretty simple really. It allows women to measure their fertility by taking their temperature first thing every morning; effectively recording hormone levels. The Natural Cycles algorithm then calculates whether it is safe to have unprotected sex that day.

Generally, a woman can only get pregnant up to 6 days in one cycle – the fertile days. Hormone fluctuations during the menstrual cycle cause a rise and fall in basal body temperature, allowing temperature readings at rest to indicate the levels of fertility.

Natural Cycles unique and revolutionary algorithm also takes in to account other factors such as sperm survival, temperature fluctuations and cycle irregularities. It detects ovulation, fertility, different stages in your cycle, and calculates accurate predictions for upcoming cycles. Green days allow you to have unprotected sex and red days indicate you should use protection.

Contraception can, therefore, play an equal role in your relationship, rather than the responsibility continually being in the hands of the woman!

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The App takes a few weeks to calibrate and get to know your own personal cycle, so you would expect to have more red days in the beginning. As the algorithm familiarises itself with your ovulation period, you can expect to see more green days. Although it sounds pretty concerning, placing your life in the hands of an App. How effective is it really?

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A large study, on over 22,000 women, conducted by Natural Cycles found the efficacy rate for preventing pregnancy to be 99% when used perfectly and 93% for typical use. Perfect use refers to using the app correctly and consistently for one year.

Typical use refers to using Natural Cycles during one year in which pregnancy may occur due to any possible reason; from the app falsely attributing a green day (method failure), to having sex on a red day without protection (human error).

Method failure rate has been found to be a mere 0.5%. Essentially when used correctly, Natural Cycles has proven to be as effective as the pill. Finally! Effective protection without the side effects.



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Will it be suitable for me?

Unfortunately, Natural cycles doesn't suit all lifestyles. If you are hungover, sick, or have slept badly, these will all have an effect on your basal temperature; meaning you would have to skip readings, or use protection. So if you are a bit of a party animal, you should probably stick the hormones – preferably ones you don't have to remember to take.

Obviously, everyone likes a drink now and again – this is fine! Students are perhaps the least suitable clientele, as the student lifestyle is likely to consist of all of those negatively impacting factors. And remembering to take your temperature every morning may be a challenge, as remembering to set your alarm so that you get out of bed before 12 pm, may also be a challenge. But for those of us who have got our life together, with a stable routine, sleeping pattern, and don't drink excessively, Natural cycles could be your answer to contraception.

Over 125,000 women in the UK are now using the Natural Cycles app. Could this revolutionary app supersede hormonal birth control? Or will we just start to see a decrease in violent mood swings but an increase in unwanted pregnancies? Or perhaps this will become the new most effective, and risk-free, form of birth control.

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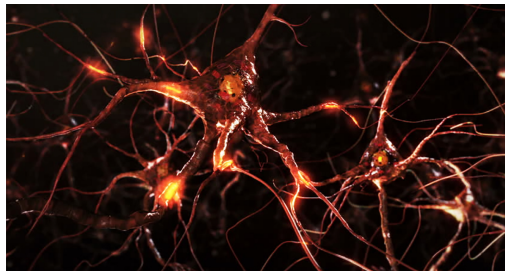
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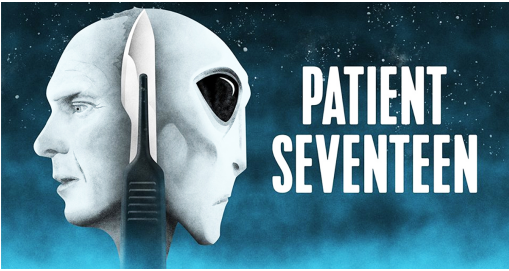


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