Pill or No Pill?

Help for parents confused about their girls' birth control risks.

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Who can you trust? The birth control pill has long been shown to increase women's risk of high blood pressure and blood clotting. But for mothers wondering if they should put their daughters on the pill to prevent pregnancy, it can be hard to know what's safe.

One new study reports that the pill may boost a woman's chance of developing cervical cancer. Another study has found that for every decade a woman takes the pill, she faces a 20 to 30 percent increase in artery-clogging plaque. But a third study says taking oral contraceptives may actually lower the risk of ovarian cancer.

So—should you or shouldn't you? "For most people, the pill is safe," says Dr. Wendy Wilcox, an ob-gyn at Montefiore Medical Center in the Bronx, New York. As for the cervical cancer risk, she says many women on the pill are having sex without condoms, which can increase the risk of human papillomavirus (HPV), a cervical cancer cause. Experts, meanwhile, say the plaque study needs further review. Still, tell your daughter's doctor about any family history of liver disease or blood clotting. Encourage a healthy diet and discourage smoking, which increases the risk of blood clots. Learn more about the pill and other forms of birth control at plannedparenthood.org.

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http://beta.docker.realhealthmag.com/article/birth-control-pill-14137-9599