

Safety of oral contraceptives for teenagers. ACOG Committee opinion: Committee on Adolescent Health Care number 90--February 1991.

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By age 18, 51% of adolescent women will be sexually active. Oral contraceptives are a safe method to avoid the potentially disastrous outcome of an unwanted pregnancy. The overall risks of taking oral contraceptives are much less than the risks of pregnancy (20). Specifically, the risks associated with the use of oral contraceptives by teenagers are negligible. Low-dose oral contraceptives have not been linked with either heart attack or stroke in contemporary U.S. studies. While the risk of thromboembolism in oral contraceptive users as a whole may be increased over that of the general population, the risk to teenagers, especially those who do not smoke, is minimal. The risk of death from oral contraceptive use for teenagers is virtually nil (12). As with all medical choices, the benefits of a treatment must be weighed against any potential risks. For adolescents, the benefits associated with the use of oral contraceptives outweigh the risks, particularly those of pregnancy. However, teenagers at risk for sexually transmitted diseases should be advised to use a barrier method along with oral contraceptives.