

■ Bone density in younger women decreased by contraceptive

According to the March, 1999 issue of *Obstetrics and Gynecology*, young women who use an injectable contraceptive may be at risk of losing or failing to generate bone density.

The study, which focused on medroxyprogesterone acetate, found that bone density levels in the spines of women users between 18-21 were 9.4% lower than women who were not using the contraceptive.

"This raises concerns about the effects of this [contraceptive] on bone density in younger adolescents who are building bone at noticeably higher rates and who may favor this method over others," said Delia Scholes, PhD, principal investigator for the study.

Failure to develop or loss of bone density leads to the development of osteoporosis and accompanying bone fractures later on in life. ▲

Oral Contraceptives May Dull Desire Permanently

An interesting report presented at the May 2005 meeting of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists in Washington, DC says that oral contraceptives, commonly known as the pill, may cause permanent decreases in women's libidos, causing them to lose sexual desire.

The pill has been associated with numerous sexual dysfunctions including loss of libido, painful intercourse and decreased or non-existent orgasms. It has always been thought that these problems would dissipate once the pill was discontinued.

The loss of libido has been associated with the pill's tendency to decrease levels of the hormone testosterone. By raising levels of a globulin (called SHGB) that attached itself to the hormone the pill basically rendered testosterone inactive. This study indicates that the situation may be permanent.

Researchers at Boston University studied 125 women who were patients at a sexual dysfunction clinic. Sixty-two of them were taking the pill, forty had taken it in the past and 23 had never taken it.

SHGB levels were measured every three months for a year. Users of the pill had levels of SHGB seven times higher than women who had never taken the pill. SHGB levels had decreased a bit in women who had stopped taking the pill but the levels were still three to four times higher than those who never used it.

This concerns researcher Irwin Goldstein. "There's the possibility" he says, "it is imprinting a woman for the rest of her life."