

High blood pressure risk in later life for teenage girls on the Pill

- **NHS have branded high blood pressure as a 'silent killer'**

Teenage girls who are on the Pill are at risk of having high blood pressure in later life, according to research.

Scientists have found that even those who have been taking the contraceptive for only a few months have readings which are significantly higher than those of other girls.

Doctors have long known that high blood pressure is one of several side-effects of the Pill but this is one of the first studies to show its effect on young girls within such a short space of time.



Risk: Teenage girls who take the Pill are in danger of having higher blood pressure later in life (picture posed by model)

Although the girls' blood pressure was still within the healthy range, the Australian researchers are concerned that it may rise further when they get older, putting them at risk of heart attacks and strokes.

High blood pressure is known as the 'silent killer' within the NHS as there are rarely any symptoms, but it gradually puts extra strain on the blood vessels and heart.

If left untreated, it can lead to heart attacks, strokes, fatal blood clots or kidney disease.



Side-effects: High blood pressure is known as the 'silent killer' within the NHS

Researchers from the University of Western Australia asked the teenagers a range of questions on their weight, diet, how often they drank alcohol and whether they smoked.

Girls were also asked if they were taking the Pill.

As they were only 17, it is probable most had not been on it for long.

Normal blood pressure should be around 130/80 mm Hg, with anything over 140/90 mm Hg deemed high.

For girls on the Pill, the first figure in this reading was already 3 mm Hg higher than others.

Dr Chi Le-Ha, whose study is published in the European Journal of Preventative Cardiology, said: 'Teenage girls taking oral contraceptives should be advised about regular blood-pressure monitoring.'