



New Interview Series Reveals Hidden Costs of Essure Birth Control for Women

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Women suffering serious side effects from Essure, opened up in a series of groundbreaking interviews conducted by writer Hannah Bessinger.

Essure is a form of birth control manufactured by Bayer Pharmaceuticals. A set of metal coils are inserted into the Fallopian tubes, generating scar tissue and blocking the tubes to prevent conception.

First released in 2002, Essure has since come under scrutiny by medical researchers and the courts for a number of side effects allegedly linked to the product. The new interviews, however, do what few pieces on the topic have done to date: they focus on the personal costs of choosing Essure, rather than the legal implications.

Brandy, a 35-year-old mother, originally believed that Essure was the right choice for her. As chronic pain and bone loss began to take their toll, however, she discovered a severe nickel allergy that made her a poor candidate for Essure ? something she wishes she had known before the procedure.

Other women express similar concerns. Amanda, a mother from Georgia, described symptoms including hair loss, dizziness, kidney problems, irregular heartbeat, and loss of bone density, which led to the loss of 14 teeth. Jennie Fischer, an interviewee from Kentucky, described similar symptoms. "I haven't been the wife or the mother that I could have been," Jennie said during her interview. "Essure has taken that from me."

Although some women in the interviews expressed an interest or desire to pursue legal action, they also expressed personal frustration at the process. "You cannot simply sue the manufacturer," says one of the women interviewed, who wishes to remain anonymous due to a case she is currently pursuing against Bayer. This woman has been correct so far. Bayer has been shielded against legal action because Essure is protected under federal preemption law.

According to attorney Spencer Bomar of Carlock Copeland, federal preemption law trumps local consumer protection statutes as well as case law, making it very difficult for victims to successfully pursue a legal claim involving devices such as Essure that have been vetted through FDA's Premarket Approval process, or PMA.

Finding resolution through other means has been difficult for some of the interviewees as well. Carla, a woman active in some of the online Essure support groups and in the movement to end preemption defense has become jaded about the possibility of justice for herself and her fellow E-sisters. "This whole thing is corrupt. Top to bottom," she says. "I was at the FDA meeting, and they treated us like prisoners and Bayer and the FDA seemed on friendly terms, and we were just dismissed?."

State lawmakers, including Congressman Mike Fitzpatrick (R-PA) and Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (D-NY), have introduced legislation aimed at reforming the PMA process and federal preemption law. One of these bills, "Ariel Grace's Law" is named after a child that was stillborn following an Essure failure in her mother.

Whether they plan to take legal action or not, all of the individual women in these groups want to get the word out to women who may be unaware of the risks of Essure. When asked what her advice would be to other women considering the procedure, Brandy did not hesitate: "Do your own research and ask questions!" she says. "There is NO stupid question when it comes to your body!"

For full contents of the interview, see: "What I Wish I Had Known: Inside The Lives of Women Affected by Essure," originally published on RecallGuide.org.

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