



Considering Getting Off The Pill or Other Hormonal Birth Control? Read This First...

Message from Milly

Greetings to all,

In our last newsletter topic poll, several of you asked for tips on how to support your body while getting off birth control pills.

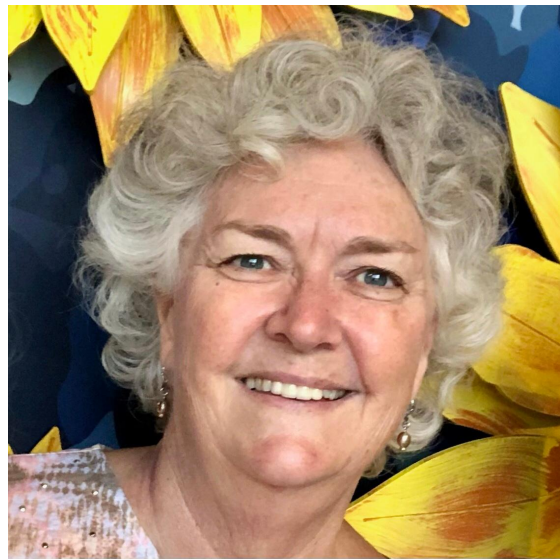
This is *music to my ears* as I have long warned about the rather hush-hush health implications of the pill for women.

These may include a heightened risk of heart disease and stroke, mental health issues, fertility problems, hormonal/endocrine issues, and nutrient deficiencies to name but a few (we'll get into this deeper coming up).

Before I go on, I want to be very clear. I'm approaching this topic from a purely health perspective.

I realize some individuals and groups are against all types of birth control altogether for those reasons, and I respect their point of view.

However, as a healthcare practitioner, I'm asked about this topic frequently, and I feel called to answer and assist without judgment for the purpose of helping women gain more autonomy over their bodies, fertility, hormones, and medical freedom.



So, I'm excited to share these tips with you in the hope they will make the transition easier.

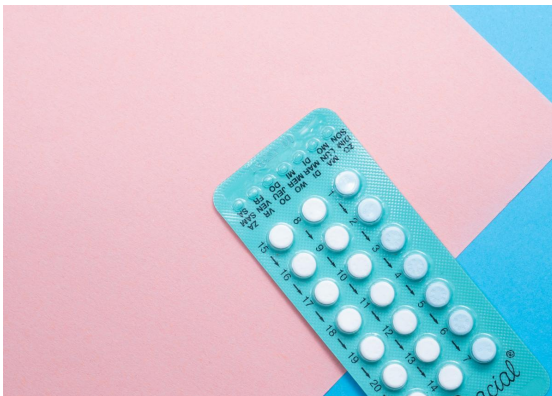
Still on the fence about going off the pill?

While I have my professional opinions about this, I realize it's a very personal decision.

Therefore, I always recommend discussing your concerns with your doctor and doing your own research on the short—and long-term risks, benefits, and alternatives to reach the best conclusions for you.

Blessings to all,

-Milly



Why Going Off The Pill Is Becoming More Popular (hint: there are a LOT of side effects you probably were never warned about)

Birth control pills have been popular since they hit the market in the 1960s.

Not only did they give women (and families) more control over their lives, but they also coincided with the feminist movement, which helped propel women into higher, more lucrative, and more fulfilling positions in the workforce.

Soon, birth control pills were not just prescribed for contraception but off-label for all manner of female issues, from PMS to acne in teens.

However, the old rule: if something seems too good to be true, it probably is, has proved to apply to BCPs.

We have long understood the connection between birth control pills and an increased risk of heart attack and stroke, which has been enough to

scare some women off.

However, the lesser-publicized side effects of taking birth control pills, and other hormonal birth control methods (such as the patch, injections, or implant devices), include:^{[1][2][3][4][5]}

- Headaches
- Nausea
- Sore Breasts
- Irregular periods
- Stomach pain
- Changes to vaginal discharge
- Negative impacts on the vaginal microbiome
- Hair loss
- Low or no sex drive
- Fertility issues
- Hormonal imbalance
- Dry eye
- Discomfort with contact lenses
- Liver damage
- Microbiome disruption
- Blood clots
- Breast cancer
- Cervical cancer
- Mental health issues, including depression and thoughts of suicide
- Disruption of thyroid hormones and possible increased risk of hypothyroidism
- Depletion of key nutrients (we'll cover this in-depth in the next section)

Wow! That's quite a list of risk factors.

This makes sense, given that the pill alters essential bodily functions related to the endocrine and nervous systems, brain, gut microbiome, etc.

One can't help but wonder how use of the pill may relate to the disturbing increases of cancer and mental illness in young women.

I share these side effects not to instill fear but to ensure women fully understand what they are agreeing to when taking these hormonal

contraceptives.

All too often, we are not given full informed consent when we are offered these medications.

This is especially worrisome for developing teens and tweens who may be prescribed BCPs for something like acne.

Sure, acne can be difficult, but is it worth these risks? I'd wager most parents and teens would say no if they had full informed consent.

For a more in-depth read on BCP side effects, I highly recommend [this article by women's health expert and naturopath Dr. Jolen Brighten.](#)

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What Happens When You Go Off Birth Control?

Hormonal birth control works by suppressing ovulation without stopping your period (in most cases, although some women use birth control to stop or control their cycle, too).

It achieves this by replacing your body's natural production of sex hormones with a stream of synthetic hormones.

So, once you discontinue using the pill, your body will start producing its natural

hormones again.

However, when any natural cycle is repressed and then liberated again, it can take some time for balance to be restored.

There is also the issue of the potential build-up of synthetic hormones, which your body will release over time, given the optimal conditions.

We're led to believe our body will metabolize these synthetic hormones, and it's no big deal.

However, that has never been proven, nor is it likely the body could metabolize that much synthetic medication given all the other toxins it's charged with mediating these days.

Many of those hormones are likely stored in the liver or fatty tissues and/or left circulating in the body.

This, along with all the other equilibrium factors, can create some unpleasant symptoms when coming off the pill.

There's even a name for it: Post Birth Control Syndrome." (PBCS)[1]

Aviva Romm introduced this name in her book "Botanical Medicine for Women's Health." Dr. Romm is a midwife, herbalist, and medical doctor. [2]

The idea has since gained traction in the integrative health field as a way to describe and validate what women go through after stopping hormonal contraception.

PBCS is different for everyone, but it can last for 3-6 months (or more) and may include:

- Irregular and/or painful periods
- Acne
- Mood swings and emotional upset
- Sleep disturbance
- Fluctuations in weight
- Headaches and migraines
- Hair loss
- Fatigue



- Gas, bloating, constipation, and changes in digestion
- Inflammation
- Thyroid issues
- And more

The good news is, you can take steps to minimize or eliminate these symptoms, which we'll discuss next.

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<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC9237896/>

2: <https://shop.elsevier.com/books/botanical-medicine-for-womens-health/romm/978-0-7020-6193-6>



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7 Ways To Support Your Transition Off Birth Control, Naturally

Our bodies are incredibly forgiving and miraculously designed to restore equilibrium when given the right tools.

Again, every woman's experience will be slightly different (so please reach out for individual support if you need it).

However, I have found these tips provide universal benefits and help ease the transition back to natural hormonal balance and function.

Tip 1: Support Your Detoxification Pathways

Removing synthetic hormones from your body takes time and effort.

Therefore, it is vital to provide extra support for your liver, gall bladder, kidneys, lymphatic system, skin, and digestive system.

There are many ways to do this, including:

- Eating extra leafy greens and cruciferous vegetables, which support phase 2 liver detox
- Drinking extra water to help

- flush the system
- Drinking a green smoothie with lots of colorful berries and greens and/or greens powder daily
 - Brisk walking and rebounding to support lymphatic function
 - Saunas or Epsom salt baths to encourage sweating
 - Juicing, see our previous newsletter: [Is Juicing Really Healthy for Everyone?](#) for tips
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- You may also consider a gentle cleanse, like Energetix Colon Clear and Pure Body Clear, which provides full-body support of detox pathways. [Email Holly](#) for more information or to order supplements.

Tip 2: Get Extra Sleep

Many women report fatigue, physical, mental, and emotional, when going off the pill.

Know this will pass, and the very best remedy is to gift yourself 8-10 hours of sleep per night.

Sleep is prime time for detox and repair and is essential to restoring hormonal balance.

Tip 3: Drink More Water Than Usual

I already mentioned this in the detox part, but it's so essential I'm saying it again!

Water is one of the best and most underrated remedies for good health.

When detoxing from the pill, it's best to aim for 10 glasses a day.

Herbal tea counts and it's a great idea to add lemon or lime, which both provide extra liver support.

Tip 4: Consider Herbs To Help Regulate Your Cycle

It can take some time for your natural cycle to come back online.

And, if you were using birth control to mask symptoms like cramping, these may return.

Some helpful traditional herbs to consider include:

- **Vitex/Chasteberry/Agnus Castus:** Promotes regular menstruation and fertility and decreases PMS symptoms.[1][2]
- **Crampbark, Chamomile, Ginger, Fennel, Cinnamon, Turmeric/Curcumin:**[3], [4] All these have been traditionally used by herbalists to ease menstrual cramps. Chamomile is also wonderful for supporting mood and sleep quality.[5]
- **Dong Quai:** A Traditional Chinese herb used to support the second phase of the menstrual cycle, ease cramps, and promote normal progesterone.[6]
- **Ashwagandha:** This traditional Ayurvedic herb is considered a panacea for supporting resilience during stressful times and hormonal function. As an adaptogen, it's also awesome for sleep and maintaining a state of calm, focused alertness. [7] And a bonus? Research suggests it supports normal thyroid function too.[8]
- **Black Cohosh:** Typically used in the first part of the cycle, it can help ease PMS and cramps.[9]

Tip 5: Restore Gut Microbiome Health

Since hormonal birth control is known to disregulate the microbiome, now is the time to restore that balance.

Some of the best ways to do this include:

- **Taking a probiotic**

supplement. I generally recommend Energetix Flora 12+ for at least 4-8 weeks, followed by Flora Synergy for several months after.

- **Getting outside in nature!** Fresh air and soil are teeming with beneficial microbes that will restore balance fast.
- **Eat cultured foods,** like sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha, yogurt, kefir, and cultured vegetables.
- **Reduce stress.** It's one of the silent killers of a healthy microbiome.
- **Eat plenty of fiber-rich fruits and vegetables.** These keep the colon flowing smoothly while providing food (prebiotics and resistant starch) for healthy gut microbes.
- **Drink bone broth or veggie broth.** Bone broth is especially helpful as a source of soothing glycine and gelatin, while veggie broth contains easy-to-digest gut-friendly nutrients and plant collagen.

Tip 6: Restore These Key Nutrients

As discussed in the first section, hormonal birth control has been shown to deplete key nutrients.

These nutrients are essential to things like stable mood, emotional health, gut health, hormonal balance, genetic expression, thyroid function, and so many other essential bodily functions.

Here are the nutrients depleted by the pill and other hormonal contraceptives:

- Vitamin B12
- Vitamin B6
- Vitamin B2
- Vitamin C
- Vitamin E
- Magnesium
- Zinc

- Folic Acid
- Selenium

Due to the long-term nutrient deficiencies caused by hormonal contraceptives, **I do recommend supplemental nutrients in addition to eating a nutrient-dense diet.**

My favorites include:

- **Energetix Phyto-B Complex**
- **B-12** such as **Pure Encapsulations B12 Folate** tablets. Or liquid methylcobalamin and/or adenosylcobalamin for children or anyone who cannot swallow pills.
- **Alka-C Buffered Vitamin C powder**, up to 5000 mg daily
- Natural trace multimineral supplements, like **Energetix SpectraMin**
- **Magnesium glycinate** or **bisglycinate chelate**
- **Selenium**, any excipient-free source, is fine
- **Natural Vitamin E**, such as those from Nordic Naturals

Email Holly for more information or to order supplements direct.

The best food sources of **B vitamins** are meats, whole grains, nuts and seeds, fruits, and vegetables.

Note: B12 must be sourced from animal foods, such as red meat, fish, and seafood or supplements.

Vitamin C can be found in abundance in cherries, citrus, mangoes, berries, broccoli, and leafy greens.

Vitamin E occurs naturally in nuts, seeds, and avocados.

Magnesium is abundant in dark leafy greens, nuts and seeds, legumes, and dark chocolate (yum!).

Selenium is found in Brazil nuts, fish, meats and poultry, cottage cheese, eggs, brown rice, and lentils.

If thyroid health is a concern, I may also recommend iodine in the form of sea vegetables or a supplement.

Tip 7: Try Acupuncture

Acupuncture is incredible for women's reproductive issues, which is why I often recommend it for fertility, PMS, cramps, and cycle irregularity.[10][11] There are loads of studies to back this up, too many to list here!

Finally, know that this too shall pass and your body (and mind) will be so much healthier for it.

If you find you need additional support or individual recommendations, please [reach out to schedule an appointment for a BioEnergetic Assessment](#) or let's discuss it at your next appointment.

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