



8 Simple Steps To Transition Off Of Hormonal Birth Control

Transitioning off of hormonal birth control can be intimidating and overwhelming—especially since few doctors provide women with adequate information about how to do it and what to expect once they make the switch.

Going off of hormonal birth control can cause some concerning side effects like acne, painful periods, and hair loss—which is exactly why you deserve to know how to prepare your body for the transition and how to lessen the impact of these frustrating side effects.

This step-by-step guide is designed to help you work WITH your doctor as you transition off of hormonal birth control, to replenish nutrients depleted by synthetic hormones, and to help you navigate the sea of non-hormonal birth control options.

With these steps, and the care of your doctor, you will have the tools to decrease side effects and transition off of hormonal birth control with ease and confidence!

Let's dive in!!

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8 Simple Steps To Transition Off Of Hormonal Birth Control (with fewer side effects!)

Step 1. Uncover what hormonal birth control has been doing to your system

The first step to transitioning off of hormonal birth control is to educate yourself on the many ways hormonal birth control has been impacting your body.

Hormonal birth control is known for depleting our bodies of necessary nutrients like magnesium, zinc, and B-vitamins—all of which are CRUCIAL to healthy hormonal balance.

The birth control pill bogs down the liver and digestive systems as a result of the daily dose of estrogen taken orally that our bodies are forced to digest, break down, and attempt to flush out. This, in turn, can disrupt the microbiome, challenge optimal digestion, and burden the liver therefore leading to issues like bloating, constipation, acne, and other signs of a compromised elimination system.

As a result of this burden and the burden placed on our adrenals due to hormonal birth control use, we often become plagued with chronic internal inflammation. This can worsen issues like anxiety, headaches, digestive discomfort, cramps, and more. (Source: Beyond The Pill)

What birth control pill users don't realize is that the synthetic pill hormones prevent them from having any type of menstrual cycle.

The birth control pill creates a steady flow of synthetic estrogen and progestin to avoid the sharp hormonal swings that trigger ovulation and a normal period.

Instead, on the birth control pill, users do not experience a true period, but rather a pill bleed that is caused simply by the drop in hormones triggered by switching to the placebo pill week. It is not a true period, which results from ovulation and the shedding of a naturally thickened uterine lining. (Source: The Period Repair Manual)

This is important to understand because when you get your first true period back after going off of hormonal birth control, it will likely look and feel very different than that of a synthetic pill bleed.

Step 2. Start prepping your body 3+ months prior to ditching hormonal birth control

Given the systemic impact that hormonal birth control has on your body, it can take a while to replenish nutrients, decrease inflammation, and support digestion and elimination—all of which are impacted by synthetic birth control.

Giving yourself 3+ months to make key diet, supplement, and lifestyle shifts prior to ditching hormonal birth control can help alleviate things like painful periods, acne, hair loss, mood swings, and other challenging side effects of going off of hormonal birth control.

Check out the following page for options to support your body in preparation for ditching hormonal birth control. (Source: Beyond The Pill)

How To Prep Your Body For Ditching Hormonal Birth Control

1. Replenish nutrients depleted by the birth control pill

- Magnesium -

Magnesium is your go-to for a happier, more comfortable periods. It's great for calming anxiety and stress, easing period cramps, and soothing mood swings. It's great for almost everything PMS related. Magnesium is also great for supporting the adrenal glands which are responsible for the production of a good portion of our hormones including—estrogen, progesterone, testosterone, and cortisol. (Source: The Period Repair Manual)

Inside tip—Look for magnesium glycinate. It's easier on the digestive system and won't cause loose stools, bloating, or bowel issues as with other forms of magnesium.

- Zinc -

Zinc supports ovarian function and healthy ovulation, which is a struggle for many women who have been on hormonal birth control for years. Zinc also helps with hormonal acne by supporting balanced testosterone and other androgen levels. (Source: The Period Repair Manual)

- B-Vitamins -

B-Vitamins are needed for optimal adrenal health, which is crucial for health hormonal balance because the adrenal

Glands are responsible for a good portion of natural hormone production. Vitamin B5 offers a calming effect on the body. Vitamin B6 is known for supporting progesterone production. Vitamin B12 is great for health energy levels. (Source: The Period Repair Manual)

2. Decrease inflammation

To decrease inflammation consider limiting or avoiding the main inflammatory foods—dairy, gluten, refined sugar, alcohol, and processed vegetable oils. Inflammation is known to compromise healthy hormone production and balance. (Source: Beyond The Pill)

3. Support digestion

Nourish your body with nutrient-packed, natural foods like fresh veggies, fruits, whole grains, healthy fats, and organic meats (if that's your thing). Eating organic will also limit your exposure to xenoestrogens, or synthetic chemical estrogens, present in pesticides used on non-organic foods. (Source: Beyond The Pill)

4. Support your liver

Nourish your liver and elimination system with cruciferous vegetables like broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and kale. Cruciferous veggies contain diindolylmethane, or DIM, which is known to assist with breaking down estrogen more efficiently, as well as lowering acne-causing androgens like testosterone. (Source: The Period Repair Manual)

Step 3. Choose your non-hormonal birth control method

An often over-looked step when transitioning off of hormonal birth control is to decide on what form of non-hormonal birth control you will use after making the switch. Options to explore include:

- Condoms -

Condoms are perhaps the simplest option. They're easy to use, easy to get, inexpensive, and can be carried with you at all times. Unlike other non-hormonal options, there are almost no side effects and little advance preparation needed to use them.

- Copper IUD

To use the copper IUD, the woman will need to have it inserted by a trained professional. The plus side is that it is a set it and forget it method that can remain in place for years and is known to be very effective. The down sides are that the copper IUD is known for making periods longer, heavier, and more intense. Some women experience heavy blood loss during their periods that can lead to an iron deficiency.

- Diaphragm -

A diaphragm is a device inserted into the vagina that rests against the cervix to prevent sperm from reaching an egg. To obtain a diaphragm, one must meet with a doctor to have the device fitted to their body. The plus side is that a diaphragm can be inserted prior to sex to avoid stopping mid-foreplay to apply a condom. The down sides are that diaphragms require the use of spermicide which can create vaginal irritation, they must be left in for hours following sexual intercourse, and have a lower effectiveness rate than other non-hormonal options.

- Fertility Awareness Methods (aka Cycle Tracking)

This is my #1 favorite non-hormonal birth control method and the one that I have personally used for nearly a decade. Fertility awareness methods of birth control involve tracking bodily symptoms to identify fertility signals and establish the window within which you can actually conceive each month. The plus sides include being in control of your body, not needing a barrier method like condoms or diaphragms, it doesn't create brutal period symptoms, and involves nothing but knowing how your body works. The downsides include that it takes some time to confidently learn and use the method AND requires that you use a barrier method like condoms while you are learning how to use the method.

Step 4. Meet with your doctor to discuss steps 1 through 3

It's important to consult with your doctor and discuss with them all of the food, supplement, medication, and lifestyle changes that you're interested in making.

Step 5. Transition off of the pill at the end of your pack, when you're ready

Consult with your doctor. However, for many women it makes the most sense to transition off of the pill at the end of your pack. Finishing your pack will allow you to have one final pill bleed and begin to ease off of the hormones in rhythm with the monthly cycle.

Step 6. Continue supporting your body with the nourishing foods and supplements from step 3—as discussed with your doctor

Your body will need on-going support as you begin to transition off of hormonal birth control and work towards getting your natural cycle back. Continuing to support your body with nourishing foods and supplements even after going off of hormonal birth control can help ease side effects and symptoms.

Step 7. Be patient

It takes some time for your body to bounce back after going off of hormonal birth control. It's likely been YEARS since your brain has had to communicate with your ovaries, which means that it's going to have to take the time to learn how to do that again. This won't happen overnight. You will need time to reestablish that communication pathway. For women who went on hormonal birth control very early in life—after just a few periods—this is a task your body has almost never had to do. Be patient. Continue nourishing and supporting your body. And, inform your doctor of any side effects.

Step 8. Track your cycle!

Learn how to track your cycle and begin the process of charting if, when, and how often you ovulate. Track the length of each cycle (from period day 1 to your next period day 1). Track your period, pms, and bodily symptoms. All of this information can give you insights into the state of your hormones, help uncover and potential

Hormonal imbalances, and can even be used to assist with the fertility awareness method of natural birth control. This information will also allow you to have more informed discussions with your doctor and ensure you get the care and results you're looking for!

For more info on cycle tracking, take a look at my Cycle Tracking Round-Up—a complete round-up of all of my blog posts on cycle tracking for hormonal health and natural birth control. Check out the Cycle Tracking Round-Up [HERE](#).

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