

# 5 FABULOUS REASONS TO DITCH THE PILL

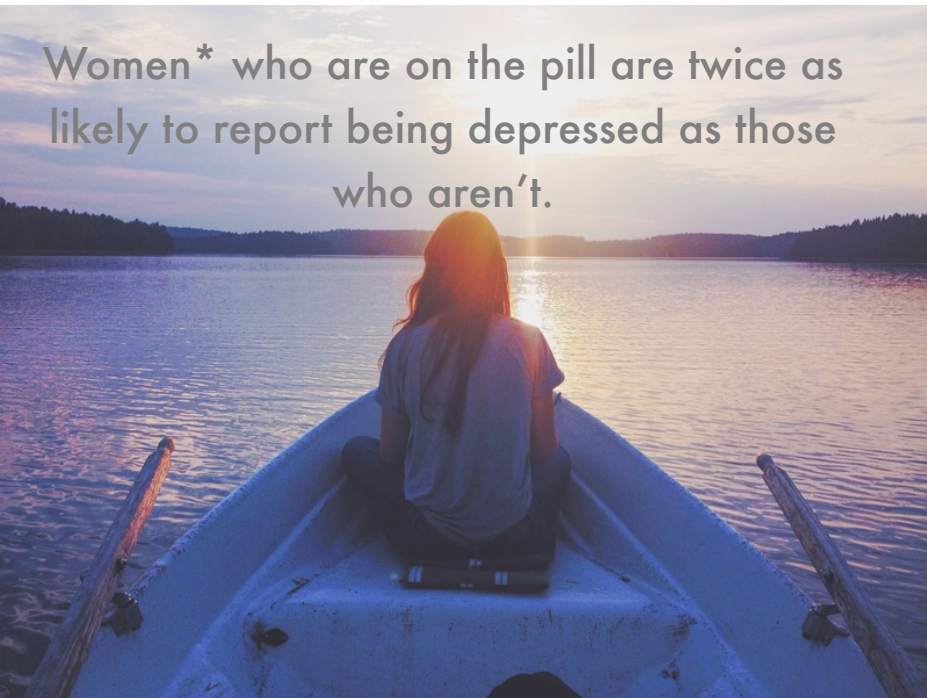
and Reclaim Your Health,  
Happiness & Future Fertility



## Reduce Your Health Risk

When we hear about blood clots causing strokes many of us dismiss it as an unlikely side effect or something that only happens when you're older. However, studies show that young women\* who are on oral contraceptives have an eight-fold increase in their risk for stroke. Even more concerning is that research published in the spring of 2011 by the [British Medical Journal](#) showed a rise in the rate of blood clots and stroke risk from the newer formulations of the birth control pill, like Yaz and Yasmin.

In the span of one month, I had two people contact me because they had near-fatal blood clots in their hearts and lungs that were attributed to long-term pill use. These contraceptive users were in their late twenties and early thirties, and were otherwise very healthy and active individuals.



Women\* who are on the pill are twice as likely to report being depressed as those who aren't.

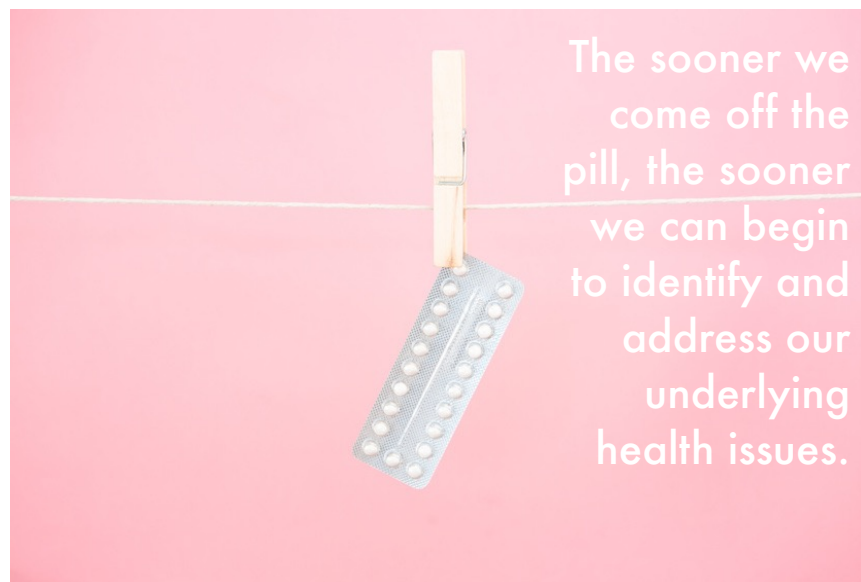
*Despite the popularity of hormonal birth control, and its public perception as being an innocuous drug, there are major medical risks associated with the pill.*

\*To date, research studies have been focused on cisgender female pill users which is why we use women in this context.

Mood-related side effects are the most common cause of discontinuation of oral contraceptives. Studies indicate that up to a third of birth control pill users discontinue use due to mood complaints. If you think you're alone in feeling this way, try googling "the pill makes me crazy." You'll find pages and pages of results of users sharing their story of how the pill has affected their mood and libido.

## Natural Cycles Are a Window Into Your Health

Individuals who cycle are often misled to believe that the pill will *improve* their health by regulating menstrual cycles and reducing menstrual pain. They are prescribed the pill to "regulate" their cycles, when in fact it does no such thing. In reality it simply creates an artificial sense of cycling, and thus suppresses the symptoms of underlying health issues. If a person who is intended to cycle is not menstruating, or is having long or irregular cycles and is put on the pill, the pill will do nothing to treat the underlying reasons why that individual is having abnormal cycles. As a result, the condition that caused that symptom in the first place will go untreated and in many cases will become worse. This serves to validate a system of medicine that ignores the underlying causes of ill health.



The sooner we come off the pill, the sooner we can begin to identify and address our underlying health issues.



The bleeding that people experience when they are using the pill is not a true period. In fact, the entire hormonal situation that happens within a person while they are on the pill does not mimic any natural state of the female reproductive lifespan.

The average teenager who has female reproductive anatomy takes about four years for her cycles to become regular. Suppressing the body's natural hormonal systems during this delicate stage of a young person's life can be dangerous to her long-term health and fertility. I see this in myself.

I went on the pill only two years after my first period, partly because my cycles were irregular and partly because my periods were debilitating. When I eventually came off of it, my cycles went back to being as erratic as they had been in my teens which was not only problematic for my health, but posed a real barrier when my husband and I tried to conceive (the [good news is I now enjoy pain-free periods!](#)) I see this pattern in my clients too - those who were put on the pill when they were young more often run into troubles when they come off it. *Individuals who take the pill to help "regulate" their cycles often have underlying health issues such as dietary, insulin, nutrition or thyroid issues that are going untreated.*

# Cut Down Your Environmental Footprint

Very few people are aware that most of the drugs or medicines we take eventually end up in the water system through our urine or feces. This is the case for all medications, but is particularly



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significant with respect to the birth control pill because it contains levels of hormones that are far higher than what our body would normally produce. Extremely high levels of female sex hormones are thus being excreted into the water system and as a result researchers are discovering that there is

a feminizing effect happening in the aquatic ecosystems. Fish and water-dwelling mammals are being born with feminine characteristics: smaller testicles, less sperm, and in some cases no reproductive capacity.

If you're like me, you strive to support companies that are in line with your own values. *Unfortunately, that's hard to do if you're using hormonal birth control.*

Historically, birth control trials have a very dark side to them. Unable to get ethics approval for testing in the U.S., the trials of the original version of the birth control pill were done in Puerto Rico in the mid 1950s. Given the much higher dosages of synthetic estrogen and progesterone in the original drug, it is not surprising that a significant percentage of participants developed severe headaches and numerous participants died from strokes and other blood clot related conditions. Although the more recent drug trials are in alignment with ethics guidelines, side effects and fatalities still occur, as is illustrated by the deaths of nearly 50 users from the newer birth control pill, Yaz.

## Discover the Benefits of Fertility Awareness

An appointment with a family doctor about contraceptive options is often limited to a discussion of *which type of pill* one should take, not *which form of contraception*. However, there are two reversible [non-hormonal forms of birth control](#) that have efficacy rates over 98% that doctors rarely mention. One is the [copper IUD](#), which is a small piece of metal that can be inserted into the uterus long-term and has an efficacy rate of 99.2%. As this choice is not right for everybody, and can have some health risks



associated with it, I am a huge fan of the second non-hormonal option available to everyone, which is *fertility awareness*.

*Fertility Awareness is the most natural, side-effect free option available aside from total abstinence and has an efficacy rate of [99.4% in perfect use](#).*

Its biggest drawback is that it is misunderstood by both the general public AND the medical community. Strangely enough, doctors are not taught the difference between the rhythm method (which is based on a simplistic system of calculating fertile days based on past cycles and has an efficacy rate as low as 70%) and fertility awareness methods that actually measure observable signs of fertility (cervical mucus and temperature) on a daily basis. Thus, doctors tend to be very wary of suggesting it as a birth control method to their clients, let alone supporting it.

Another reason this natural method isn't as widely known is due to advertising. Bayer and other pharmaceutical companies have million-dollar budgets for flashy ad campaigns, and offer free samples to give to doctors' offices. Oral contraception is a billion dollar industry, which explains why effective, non-hormonal birth control has trouble competing.

The fertility awareness method I was trained in is a Canadian technique called *Justisse*, which is secular and pro-choice. I have been using and teaching this method of birth control for the past nine years. One of the things I truly love about this method is that it

is so much more than just a birth control method. Through my fertility awareness practice I have grown closer to my partner, expanded my sexual practices, discovered food allergies and nutritional deficiencies, and deepened my connection to my body.

## Preserve Your Long-Term Fertility

Medical doctors will often advise their patients that you only need one to three months to become fertile again after coming off the pill. However, research shows that individuals take on average 7-9 months to return to normal cycling after discontinuing hormonal contraceptives. This can be very distressing for those who come off the pill with the express purpose of getting pregnant.



[Why does it take so long?](#) The birth control pill suppresses ovulation, which means you are not releasing an egg that can result in conception. Depending on how long you have been on the pill, and the health and maturity

of your body at the time you started on the pill, it may take many months for your body to “remember” how to ovulate. Secondly, the



pill can have a harmful effect on the cells of the cervix and these cells are crucial to supporting conception. The cervix is responsible for creating a special type of mucus that alters the pH balance of the vagina in order to enable sperm to survive the vaginal environment. So, when the cells of the cervix are damaged it can be hard for them to produce this mucus, thus making the vagina inhospitable to sperm and leading to decreased fertility.

I've had couples come to me who believed they needed fertility drugs and after learning how to accurately chart their cycles and time intercourse were able to conceive naturally without intervention. I have literally had clients conceive on their first round of trying when they had previously thought they were infertile and in some cases had already spent thousands of dollars on fertility treatments.

*That's the beauty of learning to chart your cycle – it can be used for years for contraception, and then if you do decide to conceive, you just reverse the process!*

## So, What's Next?

I hope the information in this document helps you feel more informed and empowered to make the contraceptive choice that is right for you. If you have questions about what we've shared here, would like more information about the *Justisse Method*, or would like personal support in finding the birth control method that is right for you, please head over to our website, where you can find relevant [blog posts](#), [FAQ](#), and [programs](#) tailored to your needs.

## Disclaimer

I have a health sciences degree and an additional four years of training in holistic reproductive health. However, I am not a doctor, and more importantly I am not YOUR doctor, so any decisions you make about your health, your medication regime, or your birth control choices should be made in consultation with a licensed health practitioner who knows your personal history.