

Period & Birth Control Guide

*And the birth control facts that make periods
easier, safer, and way less drama.*



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safer, and way less drama.*

Periods and birth control come with endless questions, myths, and half-truths. That's why Dr. Sophia Yen (Pandia Health's co-founder, doctor, and myth-busting queen) created this guide: to cut through the noise and give you the real science, no drama required.



Pandia Health is the only doctor-led, women-founded company focused 100% on hormonal health (from birth control to menopause) with online care and free delivery to make your life easier.

Inside this guide, you'll learn why you don't actually "need" a monthly bleed, how birth control can help with cramps, acne, heavy flow, and more, and which myths deserve the trash can.

Because **knowledge is power**, and you *deserve* all of it.

When a fact blows your mind, share it on TikTok or IG with @PandiaHealth and #PeriodsOptional, your cycle wins might just help someone else.

Why Bleed If You Don't Have To?

Here's the plot twist: the "monthly period" you get on the pill is not a real period. Back in the 1960s, the first birth control pills included a placebo week to mimic the natural cycle, mostly to make the idea more socially acceptable at the time.



Myth-bust:

But wait... don't I need to bleed every month to "clean my body"?

Nope. That's a myth. Your body isn't "collecting" bad blood or toxins, the uterus just builds up a lining in case of pregnancy. If no pregnancy happens, your hormone levels drop and you shed that lining.

When you're on continuous hormonal birth control, the lining doesn't build up the same way, so there's nothing to "clean out." Skipping periods is safe for most people and has been backed by decades of research ([Dr. Sophia Yen's TED Talk](#), [University of Utah Health](#)).

#periodisoptional



Consistency.

No surprise period during finals week, vacations, or big events.



Less pain & mess.

No bleed = no cramps or heavy flow days.



Protect your iron.

Heavy bleeding can drain your iron stores, which hits your energy and focus hard ([PubMed](#)).

Heavy Flow, Low Iron, and Brain Fog

If your period is heavy (think soaking through pads/tampons every couple of hours), that's not just "inconvenient." It can lead to iron deficiency anemia, which makes you:

Tired

Weak

Trouble concentrating

Feel Cold

Pale

We don't have time for that drama.

And let's be real, heavy periods can mean **missing school, work, sports, or social plans**. Diva, we *know* you're here to win, and we do not have time for that drama.

The science:

Iron helps carry oxygen in your blood. When you lose a lot of blood each month, your brain literally gets less oxygen. Cue the brain fog, fatigue, and "I just can't today" vibes. Hormonal birth control can lighten your flow by up to 50% ([PubMed](#)).

Myth-bust:

"If I take birth control and have lighter or no periods, won't the blood 'back up' inside me?"

Nope. The way the birth control pills work is they don't build the lining up to a level 10 (what you would need to grow an embryo for 40 wks). Instead it only grows it to a level 1 or 3 and keeps it there. If your lining doesn't build up as much (thanks to birth control), there's less to shed. There's no "back up."

Period Pain = Heart Attack Pain

Some menstrual cramps can be as painful as a heart attack, yes, a real heart attack according to Prof. John Guillebaud at University College London ([Teen Vogue](#)).

What's causing that pain?

It's mostly **prostaglandins**, hormone-like chemicals your body makes in high amounts during your period.

High prostaglandin levels = strong uterine muscle contractions to help shed the lining.

Those contractions squeeze blood vessels, temporarily cutting off oxygen to the muscle tissue, that's the sharp, intense pain you feel.

Prostaglandins also trigger inflammation, which adds to the discomfort ([Harvard Health](#)).

How Birth Control helps:

Hormonal birth control prevents ovulation, results in a thinner lining of the uterus (the endometrium) thus keeping prostaglandin levels lower. Less lining to get out of your uterus, means weaker contractions and way less pain.

Myth-bust:

"Cramps are just part of being a woman, you have to deal with it."

Absolutely not. Severe cramps aren't "normal" and you don't have to just suffer through them. #StopSuckingItUp Cramps can be treated and sometimes could be endometriosis that deserve medical care.

See a doctor. Get treated.

We do not have time to be curled up with a heating pad instead of living our best life.

The Birth Control Glow-Up

*Clear skin. no cycles. and hormone balance?
We love that for us.*

Acne:

Certain birth control pills are FDA-approved for acne treatment, but any of the combined birth control pills (estrogen + progesterone) help with making acne less. They work by lowering androgens (male-type hormones), which reduces oil production and clogged pores ([CHOP](#)).

Myth-bust:

"Birth control makes acne worse."

For most people, the opposite is true: combined birth control pills, patches, or rings make acne better.

Certain progestin-only options (pill, hormonal IUD, Implant), may not help acne, so talk with your doctor about the right fit. And each person is different and there are 8 different progestins, so if you notice that your acne gets worse with a specific progestin, take note and share that with your doctor and avoid that one.



Endo Pain? Not Today

Endometriosis is when tissue similar to your uterine lining grows where it's not supposed to, like on your ovaries or in your abdominal cavity. This causes chronic inflammation and severe pain.

The fix:

Continuous hormonal birth control stops ovulation, thins the uterine lining, and can slow or stop endometrial tissue growth. Studies show significant pain reduction for many users ([Nature](#)).

Dr. Yen tip: Skip the placebo/sugar/bleeding week if you have endometriosis. When you drop the hormones and you bleed, that can make the endometriosis worse.



Myth-bust:

"You can't treat endometriosis without surgery."

Not true. Surgery can help, but hormonal birth control is a first-line treatment for preventing pain and slowing disease progression.

*Pain days that keep you
from your goals?
Cancelled.*

The Cancer Protection Plot Twist

Using combined hormonal birth control long-term lowers your lifetime risk of:



Ovarian cancer
Up to 50% reduction



Endometrial cancer
About 50% lower risk



Colorectal cancer
15–20% lower risk

The protection lasts for decades after you stop ([National Cancer Institute](#)).

Myth-bust:

"Birth control causes cancer."

Hormonal birth control may slightly raise the risk of breast cancer, but the increased risk goes away after stopping it for 5-10 years. Some studies have shown an increased risk of cervical cancer in those with high-risk HPV infections and who have used birth control pills for more than 5 years.

The long-term protection against ovarian, endometrial, and colorectal cancers generally outweighs the risk for breast and cervical cancer, but each person is different. So consult your doctor.

We're not just playing defense against pregnancy. we're protecting our long-term health.



Migraines, Meet Your Match

If you get migraines tied to your cycle, hormonal birth control can help by keeping estrogen levels stable. No big hormone drop = fewer attacks ([American Migraine Foundation](#)).

Myth-bust:

*"People with migraines should **NOT** take birth control pills."*

If you have migraines with aura, estrogen-containing birth control is not safe for you because of increased stroke risk. Progestin-only methods are safer, ask your doctor for guidance. But if you don't have auras or focal neurologic deficits (one part of your body gets weak during your migraines), then you might be OK with estrogen containing birth control.



Not Just About Pregnancy, Period (pun intended)

39% of people using birth control use it for non-contraceptive reasons as well, like to prevent painful periods, acne, or treat PCOS, not just pregnancy prevention ([Kaiser Family Foundation](#)).

Myth-bust:

"Birth control is only for people who are sexually active."

Nope. Many people use it for medical reasons long before they're sexually active for acne, for painful or heavy periods. Did you know that the #1 cause of missed school/work in a person with a uterus under the age of 25 is painful and/or heavy periods?

You don't need to justify your health care choices to anyone. You do you.



Brand vs. Generic



Both have the same active ingredients and the same dosage/strength. Generics work just as well and name brands, but they're more affordable ([PubMed](#)).



Generic brands are way cheaper. They can save you hundreds a year ([NIH Study](#)).

Myth-bust:

"Generics are lower quality."

Not true! Generics must pass the same safety and quality standards as brand-name drugs.

*Saving coins and staying protected?
Yes, please.*



PCOS, birth control, and fertility

PCOS: Birth control helps treat the symptoms of polycystic ovarian syndrome by reducing androgens, and lowering risks of endometrial overgrowth ([Columbia OBGYN](#)).

Myth-bust:

"Birth Control pills make you sterile"

While you are on them, they prevent pregnancy. That's why they were invented. However, for people with PCOS, the birth control combined pill, patch, or ring is used to treat PCOS and helps them make their hormones normal. Fertility specialists treat people with PCOS with birth control to prepare them to make babies.

The reason why people think that birth control makes them sterile is because 1 in 10 women will have PCOS sometime in their life. People with PCOS have a difficult time getting pregnant because they do not consistently ovulate (pop out an egg).

If you don't pop out an egg, you can't get pregnant.

So, if you put 100 women on the birth control pill and 100 women not on the pill and watch them both for 10 years. 10% of EACH group will have a hard time getting pregnant. Not because the pill made 1 group sterile, but because 10% developed or had PCOS

*Yes to treating PCOS, my
acne, and preventing pregnancy.
all in one?*

Quick Check: Myths You've Probably Heard

When it comes to sex, pregnancy, and birth control, the internet (and friends) love to spread half-truths. Let's bust some of the biggest myths with real facts.

"I can't get pregnant on my period."

Fact: You can. Sperm can live inside the body for up to 5 days. If you ovulate soon after your period ends, there's still a chance of pregnancy.

"Pulling out works."

Fact: Pre-cum (the fluid released before ejaculation) can contain sperm. Even if your partner pulls out, pregnancy can still happen. ACOG says withdrawal is not a reliable method.

"First time = no risk."

Fact: The body doesn't give you a free pass. Pregnancy is possible any time you have unprotected sex—even the very first time.

"Certain positions make me safe."

Fact: Gravity doesn't stop sperm. No matter the position—standing, lying down, or even in the shower—unprotected sex can still result in pregnancy.

"If I pee or douche after sex, I'm safe."

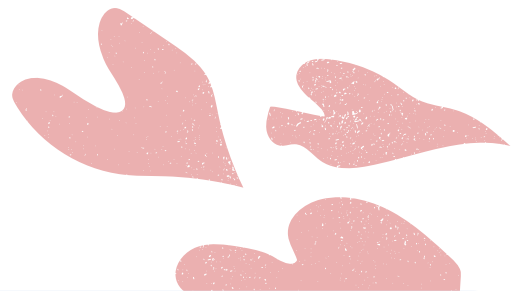
Fact: Peeing after sex helps prevent urinary tract infections, but it won't flush out sperm. Douching also doesn't work and can actually increase your risk of infections.

"Anal sex = no chance."

Fact: While pregnancy risk is lower with anal sex, sperm can still travel if it comes into contact with the vagina.

"Sex in water kills sperm."

Fact: Neither chlorine, soap, nor hot water kills sperm. If semen enters the vagina, pregnancy is still possible—even in a pool or hot tub.



Don't trust myths to protect you. If you're having sex and don't want to get pregnant, talk to a doctor about reliable birth control methods. Condoms, pills, rings, patches, IUDs, and emergency contraception are real tools that work.

Pandia Health is here to give you expert, judgment-free advice on birth control and menopause care, all online and on your schedule.

Pandia Health: Your BC Bestie

We prescribe and deliver:



Birth control pill.



Birth control patch.



Birth control ring.



Birth control shot.

Pandia Health provides expert birth control online. No pharmacy runs. No refill drama. Just birth control that arrives before you run out.

Need a prescription? Our doctors can find the best birth control for you (93% of our customers are happy with the first pill prescribed!) and write the prescription in just 2 business days or less! Just fill out a health questionnaire, (we do need a blood pressure from the past 364 days) we take care of the rest!

Got a prescription? Pandia Pharmacy can take care of your refills, free shipping to your door! #NeverRunOut of birth control on our watch.

*Convenience is self-care.
and we are here for it.*



Pandia Health: Expert Care = Happier You

Dr. Sophia Yen was the first doctor on our platform. And she wrote 3000 birth control pill prescriptions in 2 years. She saw women suffering from side effects. As a woman of color, she realized that what they are teaching in medical schools today, works great for a caucasian woman who wants to bleed every month. But if you want to make #periodsOptional or you are not the “typical white female” that is in most U.S. birth control research, then that pill does not work for you.

So, she took all the pills and ranked them from most likely to make you bleed, least likely to make you bleed, most likely to give you acne, least likely to give you acne, same for munchies, and mood. And came up with an algorithm to pick the best birth control pill based on your age (to make sure you get enough estrogen for your bones), BMI to make sure the pill works for you, race as a proxy for genetics (we're working on using genetics), and your health history and concerns such as acne, PCOS, endometriosis, migraines, etc. 93% of our patients are happy with the first pill prescribed.

*I want the best care for me.
I deserve it!*



Check Out Our Youtube Channel

Because sometimes it's easier (and way more fun) to watch a 3-minute video than scroll through pages of info.

Quick tips. real talk. no judgment.

Birth Control Explained in Minutes

- Pill, Patch, or Ring: what's right for me?
- Monophasic vs. Triphasic pills — does it matter?
- What "low dose" really means (estrogen & progesterone)
- Hormones 101: how your birth control works
- Generic vs. Brand: is one better?



Periods Shouldn't Be Confusing

- How to skip your period safely
- Why your period might be late
- Managing cramps without the drama
- First period facts



Knowledge is Power

- Does birth control help with acne?
- Does birth control cause weight gain?



TMI: Real Questions, Real Answers

- Can you get pregnant from pre-cum?
- Why do I poop more on my period?
- THC, cocaine & birth control — what you need to know
- How long can you safely skip your period?
- Can I get pregnant the first time I have sex?
- Ingrown hair or herpes?
- Can I drink alcohol on the pill?
- Does standing up after sex prevent pregnancy?



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