

Birth control pills to regulate period and acne? ^[1]

Dear Alice,

My doctor suggested to me that I start on birth control to regulate my menstrual cycle and also to help with my acne problem. I have gone to a dermatologist for four years and my face still breaks out. Do you think that I should try the birth control pill or would the side effects outweigh the benefits? I worry about the weight gain mostly.

Answer

Dear Reader,

Your decision about whether or not to take birth control pills is both a medical and a personal choice. It is important that you speak with a health care provider to voice your concerns and get all the facts. Yes, birth control pills can regulate periods, and some are effective in controlling acne. You may want to consider the following questions: What are the pros and cons of taking birth control pills? How long would you need to take the pill to get the desired effects? Could you try them out to see if you experience any positive or negative effect(s)? Other factors to consider are your age, whether or not you are having sex, and whether or not you are a smoker.

Is weight gain the only side effect you are worried about? While some women gain weight when they take the pill, there are various low-hormone birth control options that can minimize this side effect. And even though they contain lower doses of hormones, they are just as effective as higher hormone pills. If you have concerns about other side effects, or go on the pill but end up unsatisfied with your acne, other medications are available for treating acne. For more information, you can check out [Antibiotics and acne](#) ^[2].

Remember, you do not have to make a decision in a jiffy. Make sure that you communicate with your health care provider and get all the information you need in order to make a carefully calculated decision.

Alice!

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