

Messages that women's natural functions are defective or need to be medically controlled can lead to negative body image, especially in young women.

Arguments for cycle-stopping contraception often describe debilitating menstrual cramps and heavy flow as indications, but promote routine use by all women who would prefer not to menstruate for matters of convenience. While we recognize that cycle-stopping contraception may be useful for some medical conditions (such as severe endometriosis), we caution against its use as "a lifestyle choice" until safety is firmly established. Historically, nasty surprises with hormonal therapies for women (e.g., heart disease and hormone therapy for menopausal women, the link between oral contraceptives and blood clots, DES and various health problems) have taken many years to surface. Additionally, when any medication is evaluated for healthy women, the potential risks should be weighed more heavily than in situations when medication is considered to treat a disease. Menstruation is not a disease.

Finally, some have claimed that women should be "free" to choose cycle stopping contraception. But we firmly believe that authentic choice is only possible when accurate and comprehensive information is widely available.

ABOUT THE SOCIETY FOR MENSTRUAL CYCLE RESEARCH: The Society for Menstrual Cycle Research is a nonprofit, interdisciplinary research organization. Our membership includes researchers in the social and health sciences, humanities scholars, health care providers, policy makers, and students with interests in the role of the menstrual cycle in women's health and well-being.

For more information, please visit <http://www.menstruationresearch.org/>

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