

# FEMALE ATHLETES, HORMONAL CONTRACEPTION, & BONE HEALTH

Females can get placed on hormonal contraception (pill, IUD, implant, etc) for other reasons than birth control, but it's not always the best answer. Below are some common misconceptions around hormonal contraception, periods, and bone health.



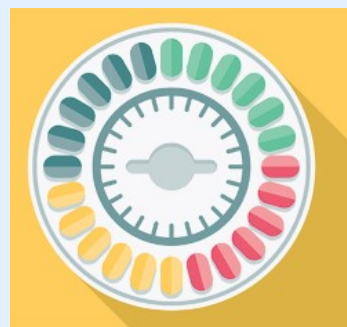
## "MOST OF MY TEAMMATES LOSE THEIR PERIOD DURING THE TRACK/XC SEASON SO IT MUST BE NORMAL"

Losing periods during the season is **not** a normal response to training. This is likely a sign of low energy availability (your fueling is not matching your exercise efforts) and you should discuss this with your coach, athletic trainer, or medical provider.



## "I LOST MY PERIOD DURING THE TRACK/XC SEASON AND MY DOCTOR WANTS TO PUT ME ON THE PILL"

Wait! This may be a sign that your hormones aren't working properly because of low energy availability. This can lead to missed periods and should be addressed. Other reasons for missed periods (polycystic ovarian syndrome, chronic diseases and pregnancy) should also be explored before starting any hormonal contraception.



## "I HAD A STRESS FRACTURE SO WAS PLACED ON HORMONAL CONTRACEPTION TO HELP MY BONES."

The evidence is inconclusive whether oral contraceptives help improve bone health, especially without addressing any underlying low energy availability. In fact, the Depo-Provera shot can negatively affect bone health! **Just because your periods are regular while on the pill, doesn't mean your hormones are working optimally to keep your bones healthy!**

