

Gemmotherapy Answers: Women DO Need To Have Periods!

Early in September an article claiming that women did not need a menstrual cycle circulated through multiple social media channels, so I am pretty sure you have seen it at one point or another. Because it was so incredibly off the mark I chose at first to let it go, but when the NYTimes included a reprint of the article from The Atlantic last week, I decided it was time to address this head on. While I honestly would rather be singing the praises of fall veggies to fill your fridge this week, it's important to put that on pause and offer some honest counter arguments to this wildly popular article.

What the article says

In case you missed it or need a refresher, the article is titled; *Women don't need to have periods*. Just on that statement alone I could fill a room with women from my practice who have suffered severe side effects, often for years, by buying into that line. All of whom I am absolutely certain would love to share their experiences that proved the opposite to be true.

The author, Alana Massey a writer from Brooklyn, has now gone 3 years without menstruating due to her use of a Mirena IUD. In the article she makes her case against the need to menstruate through quotes from an interesting array of professionals to support her argument. Through it all she sings the praises of the gains she has experienced and shares these opinions:

she was "inconvenienced and frankly resentful of the fact that I had to spend three to seven days per month bleeding. . ."

she didn't "want the burden of buying tampons and avoiding wearing white."

Believes that, "getting rid of women's periods is a bonus that saves them time, money, pain, and stress, with no known medical downsides."

Declares that "if they ever want their periods back, all they need to do is have the IUD or implant removed."

She cites a study on the positive health effects of women using IUD's from the New England Journal of Medicine. You would need to read the fine print of this study to see that the "health factors" accessed in the study included:

1. practical difficulties
2. social life
3. psychological health
4. physical health
5. work and daily routine
6. family life
7. relationships

While I will not argue all of these are part of a woman's well-being, they are secondary to her physiological symptoms that I believe this study chose to ignore. Nowhere do they look at what the effects the IUD had on the rest of the body, very likely because conventional medicine on the whole does not see the body in this way, choosing instead to look at each organ as a separate entity.

Here how I see it

What I've learned is though the uterus is thought of as primarily a womb, it actually functions first as another pathway of elimination for women. Monthly cycles are an extra way for women's bodies to clean. This means that:

1. You DO need your period and it should NOT be painful. Those painful symptoms are there to bring your attention to a deeper imbalance that likely began even before your menstrual cycles did. Read this post about what that

imbalance looked like in your childhood. So this isn't an either/or situation, it's a clear cry from your body to fix the root of the problem.

2. Using hormonal birth control to suppress menstrual pain is only exacerbating the inflammation caused by a sluggish lymphatic system and less than optimal elimination organs. This post on painful periods explains how you're just shifting symptoms this way.
3. Disruption of a regular cycle for any length of time will likely lead to overworked bowels and/or kidneys. This creates a build up of acidic wastes which will then produce any or all of these symptoms:
 - Digestive disturbances (Bloating, flatulence, acid reflux)
 - Changes in bowel movements (less than the optimal two a day, loose frequent stools)
 - Increase need to urinate or sense of an oncoming UTI
 - Nighttime urination
 - Skin disturbances (acne and/or eczema)
 - Painful breast swelling
 - Sleep disturbances
 - Lower back pain
 - Irritability, Increased Anxiety, or Depressive SymptomsThis post on inflammation and infertility discusses the approach I use in my practice.
4. Finally, don't forget there is a huge pharmaceutical industry out there whose livelihood depends on the sale of birth control devices that will ease your pain or stop your period. It's an unfortunate fact that much of the research we rely on for our health information is funded by the pharmaceutical industry. This is not cynicism, this is the truth and we can no longer risk our health and that of the next generation because of our naiveté. The greatest source of truth is to listen

to your body and recognize its natural healing capabilities. Learning to listen and taking proactive steps that work WITH our body's innate ability to clean and heal, we can have it all—painless periods and a body in harmony.

This is a topic very near and dear to my heart. I have two grown daughters who I have coached through this approach and I work primarily with women's fertility on a daily basis in my practice. I see day in and out the mis-service done to women and their bodies by conventional medicine, advice that does not take into account the integrated functions of the body, and highly accepted and promoted prescription birth control that is dangerous in the long run.

After removing the IUD or discontinuing the use of any hormonal birth control, a full body detox is in order to restore a regular cycle, and address menstrual pain, endometriosis, and all inflammatory conditions at their source. In my office this is accomplished by applying the Living Well 4, utilizing the therapies of Gemmotherapy, Homeopathy and a Plant-Based Diet to ease the body into harmony. The length of the process is dependent on how long the birth control methods were in place, inherited traits, and commitment to the protocols.

I'd love to hear from women who have personally experienced the negative side of eliminating a monthly menstrual flow. I'm hoping, too, that women who have worked with me to heal their menstrual symptoms and harmonize their bodies will share their experiences.

I hope I've given you pause to question this No Periods movement at least a bit more. I know much of what I say here is counter to what's being reported from these generally reliable sources, but I feel very strongly that there are better, healthier ways for you and your loved ones.

Please do share your questions or experiences in the comments section and read what others have to say. Together we can start a broader conversation about this underexamined women's issue.