

# Quitting Contraceptives Might Lower Vitamin D Status



By Ruth Kava — August 8, 2016

*Women who use estrogen-containing contraceptives may have an increased level of vitamin D in their blood. However, a recent study suggests that the vitamin level can drop if she decides to become pregnant and stops taking the pills. It's important for women and their doctors to be aware of this possibility.*



Contraceptive Pills via [Shutterstock](#) [1]

Young women who take hormonal birth control pills that contain estrogen may have enhanced levels of vitamin D in their blood. However, if they decide to quit using them in order to become pregnant, those levels can drop — at least according to a recent [study](#) [2] published in the *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism*.

Dr. Quaker Harmon from the National Institute of Environmental Health, Research Triangle Park, NC and colleagues evaluated the Vitamin D status of nearly 1700 African-American women living in the Detroit, MI vicinity. All were 23-24 years of age. As part of a study on uterine fibroids, the women had given blood samples, which were then analyzed for vitamin D content.

The authors adjusted for changes in exposure to the sun, since that can increase vitamin D levels. They then found that women who were using hormonal contraceptive pills had, on average, a twenty percent higher level of vitamin D than women who weren't on the pills. While interesting in itself, these data suggest that when a woman stops taking hormonal contraception, her levels of vitamin D may decrease. This can be problematic if the levels drop enough so that they are not adequate for fetal development.

Dr. Harmon was [quoted](#) [3]: "Our findings indicate women may run the risk of developing vitamin D

deficiency just when they want to become pregnant. For women who are planning to stop using birth control, it is worth taking steps to ensure that vitamin D levels are adequate while trying to conceive and during pregnancy."

While this study is relatively small, and cross-sectional, it is worth some attention from women and their healthcare providers — it's important that pregnant women have adequate levels of vitamin D before and during gestation.

---

COPYRIGHT © 1978-2016 BY THE AMERICAN COUNCIL ON SCIENCE AND HEALTH

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.acsh.org/news/2016/08/08/quitting-contraceptives-might-lower-vitamin-d-status>

**Links**

[1] <http://Shutterstock.com>

[2] <http://press.endocrine.org/doi/10.1210/jc.2016-1658>

[3] [http://www.sciencecodex.com/vitamin\\_d\\_levels\\_may\\_drop\\_when\\_women\\_stop\\_using\\_birth\\_control-187714](http://www.sciencecodex.com/vitamin_d_levels_may_drop_when_women_stop_using_birth_control-187714)