

The use of birth control pills in a group of obese and normal weight monkeys caused a significant decrease in body weight and percent body fat most likely due to an increase in basal metabolic rate without an impact on percent lean body mass, food intake, or activity levels. In general, the obese group appears to be driving the significant changes seen for the entire group. With pill cessation, these changes resolved and the measurements returned to baseline.

Human studies have not been able to conclusively determine if birth control pills have a significant impact on body weight. Non-human primates offer the closest model in which to study this elusive outcome as certain factors (i.e. caloric intake, physical activity) can be more closely monitored and nonhuman primates have very similar reproductive and metabolic systems to humans. However, we realize our results may not be entirely transferable to humans.

Our results suggest that metabolic changes secondary to exposure to birth control pills cause weight loss in obese animals.