

All About the Birth Control Shot (Depo-Provera)

Clinic Phone # _____ 24 Hour emergency phone # _____

What is the birth control shot (Depo-Provera)?

- An injection you get every 10- 12 weeks.
- It contains the hormone progesterone, one of the hormones made by a woman's body.

How does Depo-Provera work?

The shot works by keeping the woman's eggs from leaving her ovaries. It also helps keep the sperm from meeting the egg and the egg from attaching to the uterus. The shot becomes effective within 24 hours after it has been given.

How well does it work?

The shot is more than 99% effective if it is used the right way. That means that less than 1 woman out of 100 will get pregnant when using Depo-Provera. If not used the right way 3 out of 100 women will get pregnant.

How is the shot given?

- The shot should be given by the 5th day after your period starts. It becomes effective after 24 hours.
- The shot is given in the hip or the arm. It can be given in the muscle or under your skin. You may notice some slight soreness after the shot was given.
- You will need to return to the clinic by the end of 12 weeks to get another shot to keep the hormone level high enough to stop you from getting pregnant.
- If you are late getting your shot you will need to use condoms and you may need to get a pregnancy test before you can get another shot. Be sure to ask your clinician about Emergency Contraception.

What if I want to stop using the shot?

- You can stop using the shot anytime.
- If I stop the shot because you want to become pregnant, you may want to use a birth control method without hormones (like condoms) until you have one regular period.

What if I am late getting a shot?

If you forget to get your shot on time, you could get pregnant. Follow these steps:

- Call the clinic right away to get an appointment for your shot.
- If you have had sex since your shot was due, call the clinic and ask about Emergency Contraceptive Pills.
- Use a second form of birth control (condoms) until you get your next shot. Follow your clinic's advice on how long to use the second method.

What are the side effects of the shot?

- All women will have changes in their periods. You may have an increase or decrease in bleeding. You may have spotting or you may not have periods at all.
- Breast Tenderness
- Headaches
- Changes in your interest in sex
- Weight Gain

It is important to know that some of these side effects may not go away for a few months after you stop using Depo-Provera.

Women who use Depo-Provera may lose significant bone mineral density. This bone loss is shown to be greater the longer Depo-Provera is used. However, recent research shows that this loss of bone mineral density may be reversible, especially in younger women. You should eat foods high in calcium and vitamin D, take a daily vitamin supplement containing calcium and vitamin D, and exercise regularly to help keep your bones strong.

Some women should not use the shot:

- If you have or have ever had breast cancer.
- If you have ever had blood clots or a stroke
- If you have bleeding from your vagina that can't be explained.
- If you have liver disease.

It is important to talk to your clinician about these conditions.

What are some other things I should know about the shot?

- It lasts for 12 weeks.
- It can take 10 months (and sometimes longer) to get pregnant after you stop using the shot.

Watch for these warning signs.

Call the clinic right away if you have:

- Abdominal Pain
- Chest Pain
- Headaches
- Eye Problems
- Severe leg pain

The birth control shot does not protect you from HIV (the AIDS virus) and other diseases you can get from having sex. Use condoms along with the shot to protect yourself from these diseases.