



INJECTABLE CONTRACEPTIVE

What is the injectable contraceptive?

The injectable contraceptive, also known as Depo-Provera®, is given once every 12 weeks (four times a year) as an injection (shot) to prevent pregnancy. Depo-Provera® contains only one hormone, a progestin. Depo-Provera® is a highly effective form of birth control, 97 to 99.7 percent effective if used the right way.

How does Depo-Provera® work?

Depo-Provera® prevents the ovaries from releasing an egg each month (ovulation). Depo-Provera® also changes the lining of the uterus making it difficult for an egg to attach itself. Finally, Depo-Provera® changes the mucus in the cervix making it harder for sperm to enter the uterus.

Who can use Depo-Provera®?

All individuals seeking a reliable and reversible method of birth control that requires little attention. Also, Depo-Provera® may be a good option for people who are unable to take estrogen. However, there are certain health issues for which Depo-Provera® is not the best option.

How do I use Depo-Provera®?

Depo-Provera® must be injected into the upper arm (deltoid muscle) or the hip (gluteus muscle) by a health care provider (HCP):

- During the first 5 days of your period;
- During the first 5 days of stopping the birth control pill, the Evra® patch or the NuvaRing®;
- During the first 5 days after an abortion;
- During the first 5 days after having a baby if not breast/chestfeeding. If breast/chestfeeding, wait 4 to 6 weeks until breast milk is established;
- Any time during the menstrual cycle until pregnancy or the possibility of pregnancy can be ruled out.

Backup?

If given within the first 5 days of your period, Depo-Provera® is effective within the first 24 hours. If given after the first 5 days of the menstrual cycle, a backup method of birth control should be used for the next two weeks.

Late injection

If it has been 13 or more weeks since your last injection (shot), use a backup method of birth control such as condoms until the next Depo-Provera® injection can be given and for two weeks after having the injection.

What are the advantages, possible side effects/complications of Depo-Provera®?

Advantages:

- Convenient – one shot every three months
- Some people stop having their periods
- Decreased cramping and menstrual bleeding
- Reduced risk of endometrial cancer
- Reduction of symptoms linked with endometriosis, premenstrual syndrome and chronic pelvic pain
- Decreased incidence of seizures
- Possible reduced risk of pelvic inflammatory disease

Possible side effects:

- Reduction in bone mineral density (bone mass);
- Menstrual cycle changes (irregular bleeding);
- Hormonal side effects:
 - Headache
 - Acne
 - Decreased libido
 - Nausea
 - Breast tenderness
- Weight gain due to appetite stimulation
- Mood effects

Remember

Depo-Provera® and Bone Mineral Density

A side effect of Depo-Provera® is a decrease in bone mineral density (BMD). Most of this BMD loss occurs within the first two years of use, and it has been noted that BMD returns almost to previous levels about two years after usage stops. While on Depo-Provera®, bone health should be considered, therefore eat calcium-rich foods, exercise regularly and limit your nicotine and alcohol intake.

- Depo-Provera® does not protect you against sexually transmitted and blood borne infections (STBBIs) or HIV; use condoms to lower your risk.
- If you experience any side effects after the injection was given, it cannot be reversed until the hormones wear off.

- Depo-Provera® does not affect your fertility, but there may be a delay in the return of ovulation.

Call the **Sexual Health Infoline Ontario** at 1-800-668-2437 if you have questions or need help.

For more information on Depo-Provera®, please visit: www.sexandu.ca

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