

Depo Provera (The "shot")

Depo Provera is an injection of a hormone called progesterone. It is a very effective form of birth control. Depo Provera works by stopping the egg from being released from the ovary, thickening the mucous of the cervix and thinning the lining of the uterus.

How is it given?

- Your very first injection is usually given in the first five days of your period.
- It is given in the upper arm or buttocks.
- Injections are given every 12 weeks by a healthcare provider.

The injections are given every 12 to 13 weeks (four times a year). If you are later than 13 weeks, you will need to use a back-up method of birth control (i.e. condoms) until you get your next injection and for two weeks after.

Possible Side Effects

- Irregular bleeding is common in the first few months, though some women have no bleeding at all. After one year of use, up to 55 percent of women stop having periods
- Weight gain may occur for some women (the average weight gain in the first year is about five pounds and may be due to increased appetite with an increased food intake)
- Bone density loss (bone density improves when the injections are stopped). Women should make sure they get enough Calcium and Vitamin D, either from their diet or from vitamin supplements.

Why use Depo Provera?

You cannot use estrogen

- Easy birth control routine (one injection four times a year)
- Can decrease risks of endometrial cancer, ovarian cancer, and pelvic inflammatory disease
- Fewer or no periods, less menstrual cramping and pain
- Can be used by women over the age of 35 who smoke

Who should not use Depo Provera?

- If you are pregnant or you think you might be
- If you have abnormal vaginal bleeding
- If you have a history of liver disease or breast cancer

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Remember, Depo Provera prevents pregnancy, not sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Always use a condom to protect yourself from STIs.

If you have any questions, call KFL&A Public Health at 613-549-1232 or 1-800-267-7875, ext. 1275.

Revised using: The Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada Injection Depo Provera. September 5, 2006. Retrieved March 18, 2009, from <http://sexualityandu.ca/teens/contraception-2-3.aspx>

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