



Using Depo-Provera (Birth Control Shot)

How Does Depo-Provera Work?

Depo-Provera is a hormonal shot given every 12 weeks (3months) to prevent pregnancy. The hormone (progestin) in Depo-Provera prevents the release of an egg so it can not be fertilized. It will also thicken mucus at the cervix which can block sperm from entering the uterus and joining with an egg. It also thins the lining of the uterus.

How to Start Depo-Provera

You will need to visit your medical provider for a prescription for the shot. The shot will be given in the office after you take a pregnancy test. ***You will need to return to the clinic in 12 weeks for another shot. You cannot give the shot to yourself.*** If you return within the 12 weeks, you do not need another pregnancy test. If you are late for your next shot, there is a risk of pregnancy, so you will need to have another pregnancy test.

Benefits of Depo-Provera

- It is safe, simple, and convenient
- It is 99% effective
- It is long lasting

Common Side Effects

- Irregular bleeding especially in the first 6-12 months
- No menstrual bleeding for some women after 12 months
- Temporary bone thinning. Bone loss is greater the longer you use Depo-Provera. Bone growth returns when stopping the shot. Some bone loss can be prevented by exercising and taking Calcium and Vitamin D supplements.
- Less common side effects include: depression or moodiness, change in appetite and weight gain, change in sex drive, hair loss or increase on face and body, headaches, nausea, and sore breasts.

Call Your Doctor Right Away if You Have

- Abdominal pain (severe)
- Chest pain (severe)/shortness of breath
- Headaches (severe)
- Eye problems – blurred vision or loss of vision
- Severe leg pain (calf or thigh)

Women getting the shot have a small increased risk for getting a blood clot in the leg or lung. This risk is very low: about 1 in 15,000 women. If you smoke, this risk increases.