

## Depo-Provera

### What is Depo-Provera?

Depo-Provera is a form of long-acting birth control which is given every three months as an injection. It prevents pregnancy for 12 weeks.

It contains a progesterone hormone called "medroxyprogesterone acetate".

### How does it work?

Depo-Provera work by inhibiting ovulation (preventing release of the egg.) It causes a decrease in the sperm's travelling abilities by changing the cervical mucosa. It also inhibits implantation (attachment) onto the endometrium (lining of the uterus).

### Advantages of Depo-Provera:

Convenience, since only one injection is needed every 3 months

Very effective; if used correctly, it is 99.7% effective

Decreases risk of endometrial cancer

Useful for women who cannot take estrogen

Very few interactions with other medications

### Disadvantages of Depo-Provera:

Requires a shot

Changes menstrual periods: Some women have lighter periods; some women do not have any menstrual periods at all

Can cause unpredictable periods, spotting, or irregular bleeding, especially during the first few months

Does NOT protect against sexually transmitted diseases such HIV, warts, herpes, gonorrhea, and chlamydia

May increase acne

May cause mild weight gain

Long term use may cause decreased bone mineral density or decreases in HDL (the "good" cholesterol)

### Possible Side Effects:

Increase in acne

Headaches

Mild weight gain

Mood changes

Nausea

Breast tenderness

Irregular bleeding

### Which women should not get Depo-Provera?

Pregnant

Undiagnosed irregular vaginal bleeding

History of blood clots

Allergy to the medication

History of liver disease

Breast cancer

### **How do I take Depo-Provera?**

Depo-Provera should be given within 5 days after the start of your menstrual period. A pregnancy test must be done before the shot is given, because the medication would be harmful to an unborn baby.

The shot is given in the arm or buttock.

The shot needs to be given every 3 months. If you are late for the shot, you will have to use a back-up method against getting pregnant (e.g. a condom).