



How does very effective birth control that you only have to think about 4 times a year sound to you?

Depo-Provera, sometimes called “The Shot,” is a long-lasting injection that protects you from getting pregnant. If your doctor agrees it is a good form of birth control for you, your doctor will prescribe it for you.

Here’s how to use Depo-Provera

1. Start as checked below:
 - Start within the first 5 days of starting your period. You are protected from pregnancy right away.
 - Start today:
 - The shot takes 7 days to start working, so either do

not have sex or use condoms for the first 7 days.

- Come in to repeat a pregnancy test after 3 weeks.
2. You may have these common side effects:
 - **Changes in your period**
You won’t have your period every month, but instead have irregular, unpredictable bleeding. This is annoying, but not a serious problem.
 - **Weight changes**
Some teens gain weight, especially those who are already overweight. See side 2 for more information about preventing weight gain.
 3. Come in to Kaiser Permanente to get your next shot in 3 months. If you didn’t get the shot at the time of your period, be sure to ask for a pregnancy test before getting another shot.
 4. Always use a condom. Depo-Provera does not protect you from sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

What is Depo-Provera?

Depo-Provera is a shot that protects you against pregnancy for a full 3 months. It contains a chemical similar to the natural hormone progesterone. It is one of the most effective birth control methods available.

How does it work?

Depo-Provera stops your ovaries from releasing eggs, so they cannot be fertilized by sperm. Depo-Provera also causes changes in the lining of your uterus, so you are less likely to become pregnant.

Benefits of Depo-Provera

- **It works.** Fewer than 3 percent of women who use Depo-Provera correctly will become pregnant.
- **It’s convenient.** You don’t need to remember to take a pill each day. Since you only need to get the shot every 3 months, you’re getting very effective birth control that you only have to think about 4 times a year.
- **It’s private.** No pills to keep at home.

What about Depo-Provera and bone thinning?

Depo-Provera may cause bone thinning that increases the longer you take it. However, when you stop using Depo-Provera, your bones do recover. We do not know whether bone mass comes back completely or if using this form of birth control increases your risk of broken bones later in life.

What can I do to protect my bones?

To keep your bones healthy:

- Do regular weight-bearing exercise, such as walking, jogging, or lifting weights.
- Include extra Calcium and Vitamin D in your diet. You can do this with changes to your diet or with supplements.
- If you want to continue taking Depo-Provera longer than 2 years, discuss the risks and benefits with your doctor.
- Bone mineral density testing (BMD) is not usually recommended for young women.

Other side effects

- You won't have your period every month, but it's very common to have irregular bleeding. This unpredictable spotting can be annoying, but not a serious problem.
- If you use Depo-Provera for more than a year, your periods may stop completely. Periods return within 6 -18 months after the shots have been stopped and you will be able to get pregnant, if you want to.

- Not all women who use Depo-Provera gain weight, but some women do gain several pounds while they are on it. If you are already overweight, you are more likely to have some weight gain with Depo-Provera. Eating lots of fruits and vegetables, cutting back on sodas, watching less TV and spending less time in front of the computer can all help you maintain your weight. Regular exercise is important, too. Aim for 60 minutes most days of the week.
- Other possible side effects may include tender breasts, headaches, and/or mood changes.

We're glad you're taking charge of your health and protecting yourself against unwanted pregnancy. If you have any questions or concerns about taking Depo-Provera, check out the resources below or check in with your doctor.

For more information, check out:

- Kaiser Permanente: kp.org
- Kids Health, Teen Site: kidshealth.org/teen
- Go Ask Alice, Columbia University's Question and Answer Site: goaskalice.columbia.edu
- Planned Parenthood: plannedparenthood.org

