

DEPO-PROVERA

(Depo-Provera also known as Medroxyprogesterone Acetate)

What is Depo-Provera?

Depo-Provera is a hormone injection given every 3 months (90 days) to prevent pregnancy. Depo-Provera has been approved for contraceptive use in the United States by the Food and Drug Administration. It can also be used in the treatment of endometriosis, in the treatment of hormone imbalance, and in the treatment of irregular vaginal bleeding.

How does it work?

It works much like the birth control pill by primarily blocking the ovary from releasing an egg. It also causes changes in the endometrial lining of the uterus making implantation of a fertilized egg very unlikely.

Who should use this method?

Depo-Provera may be indicated for women who cannot take birth control pills because of various reasons such as nausea or forgetting to take pills every day. It can also be a good method for women with medical problems that prevent them from taking birth control pills such as:

- Sickle cell anemia
- Migraine headaches
- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Over age 35 and a smoker

How effective is Depo-Provera?

The injection is more than 99% effective if given every 3 months. It is best to receive the first injection during or just after the beginning of a menstrual period.

Can Depo-Provera be used on women who have just had a baby?

Yes. It is safe for women who have just delivered a baby. This method can also be used by women who are breastfeeding.

Are there any problems with Depo-Provera?

Most women will have some irregular bleeding after they get the injection. This can be in the form of on-and-off spotting or frequent bleeding, and some do not bleed at all. More than half the women who use Depo-Provera for 1 year stop having periods completely. Another consideration is that there is a small amount of bone loss that occurs with this medication and the bone loss may continue as long as the person is on the medication. At this time, it appears that the bone loss is at least partially, and perhaps completely, reversed upon discontinuing the medication.

As with any hormone, like the birth control pill, there are the following risks although they appear to be less common on Depo-Provera than birth control pills and these are:

- Blood clot to the leg or lung
- Stroke or heart attack (rare)
- High blood pressure
- Nausea

- Headaches
- Depression
- Weight gain
- Breast tenderness
- Worsening of acne

Who should not use Depo-Provera.

- Women who think they are pregnant
- Women who feel uncomfortable having irregular bleeding or no bleeding at all
- Women who are not able to return for repeat injections every 3 months
- Women who may wish to become pregnant in less than 1 year
- Women who have an allergy to medroxyprogesterone acetate or other parts of the medicine
- Women with history of blood clots, liver disease, stroke or unexplained vaginal bleeding

Will I be able to get pregnant after I stop Depo-Provera?

Of those women who attempt pregnancy after Depo-Provera injections, 70% will conceive within the first 12 months. The remaining women will have the same fertility rates as non-Depo-Provera users within 24 months.