

# Facts About **Depo-Provera (The Shot)**

## **What is Depo-Provera?**

Depo-Provera is a shot that prevents pregnancy for up to 3 months. There are two types of Depo-Provera and both prevent pregnancy about 94% of the time, if taken on time. If you do not get a new shot every 11-13 weeks (Depo-Provera 150mg) or 12-14 weeks (Depo-subQ Provera 104) you can get pregnant.

## **How do Depo-Provera shots work?**

Depo-Provera works by releasing a female hormone in your body. This hormone prevents pregnancy in the following ways:

It may:

- Keep the body from releasing an egg that could be fertilized by a man's sperm
- Change the cervical mucus making it more difficult for sperm to enter the uterus
- Keep a fertilized egg from attaching to the uterus

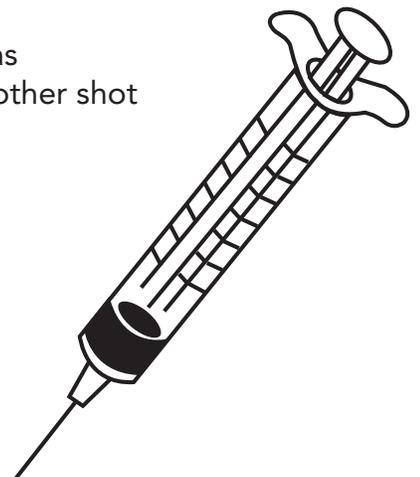
When Depo-Provera is given by "Quick Start" method – you get the first injection when you haven't had sex for two weeks (or used a condom 100% of the time) and have a negative pregnancy test. You then need to use condoms for at least 7 days after the injection for additional protection.

## **Things to know and do before getting a Depo-Provera shot:**

- Tell your doctor if you take any medicines or start a new medicine.
- You can still breastfeed your baby if you take the Depo-Provera shot.
- Your doctor may tell you to use a backup method of birth control, such as condoms, for a week after you get your first shot. As long as you get another shot every 3 months, you do not need to use another form of birth control.
- The shot does not require the consent of your partner.

## **You should not take Depo-Provera if:**

- You are pregnant or think you might be pregnant
- You have bleeding from your vagina and you don't know why
- You have liver disease
- You have ever had blood clots, breast cancer, heart attack or stroke



## **Will I have any problems if I take Depo-Provera shots?**

- Depo-Provera can lower the amount of calcium stored in your bones and may weaken your bones if taken for a long time (more than 2 years). This could lead to fractures or osteoporosis later in life. However, normal bone growth returns when you stop taking the Depo-Provera shot. Every woman should take steps to have healthy bones. To do this, take in plenty of calcium and get plenty of exercise. Talk to your doctor or nurse about calcium rich foods and supplements you can take to help prevent bone loss.

## **What are the possible side effects of Depo-Provera?**

- The most common side effect for women using Depo-Provera is irregular bleeding. It is more common in the first 6 to 12 months of use. You may bleed more or less when you have your period than you did before taking the shot, or you may not have a period at all. Other side effects may include headaches, nervous feeling, nausea (feel sick to your stomach), sore breasts, change in appetite, weight gain or loss, dizziness, hair loss or increased hair on face or body.
- You may have irregular cycles once you stop using Depo-Provera. Your cycle should return to normal in time.
- After using Depo-Provera even for a year, there may be a delay in getting pregnant. On average, it may take up to 10 months or longer to get pregnant after your last shot. This is normal with Depo-Provera.

## **Are there any warning signs I need to watch for?**

Serious problems are rare. Call your doctor or nurse if any of these warning signs happen to you:

- Sharp chest pain or sudden shortness of breath
- Sudden severe headache or vomiting, dizziness or fainting, problems with your eyesight or speech, weakness, or numbness in an arm or leg
- Severe pain or swelling in the lower leg
- Unusually heavy vaginal bleeding
- Severe pain or tenderness in the lower abdominal area

## **REMEMBER:**

Depo-Provera shots do not protect you from STIs (sexually transmitted infections) or HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) that you can get when you have sex. To protect yourself, use a latex or vinyl condom every time you have oral, vaginal or anal sex.

Smoking increases your risk of serious side effects. Women who use hormonal birth control methods should not smoke. This includes electronic cigarettes.

