

DEPO-PROVERA™ (Injectable Contraception)

TO YOUR HEALTH - PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUT

DESCRIPTION

Depo-Provera™ is an injectable, long-acting progestin (hormone) form of contraception/birth control available with a prescription. It acts by preventing the release of an egg from a woman's ovaries. Also, progestins cause thickening of cervical mucus making it harder for the partner's sperm to reach the egg along with reducing the growth of the uterine lining making it more difficult for a fertilized egg to implant.

Depo-Provera™ provides contraception for three months from the date of each injection. The first injection should be given within the first five days of your menstrual period or within five days after delivering a baby if you will not be breastfeeding. If the injection is given later than five days from the first day of your last menstrual period, you will need to use another method of birth control as directed by your health care provider. With continuous use and receipt of injections on time (every 11-13 weeks), it can be 99.7% effective in preventing pregnancy. You may be required to obtain a pregnancy test if you are later for your shot prior to receiving your next injection.

This drug does not alter your baseline fertility, though it may take up to eighteen months to conceive after the last injection.

It does not provide protection against sexually transmitted infections including gonorrhea, herpes, syphilis, chlamydia, HIV(AIDS), and others. A condom may reduce the risk of acquiring some sexually transmitted diseases. Patients are encouraged to use condoms during sexual activity.

BENEFITS

Depo-Provera™:

- does not contain estrogen
- is long-lasting
- is more convenient and private than some other methods
- can be used by nursing mothers (beginning 6 weeks after childbirth)
- is reversible - if you want to stop, simply do not get your next injection, but start another contraceptive method when your next injection is due.

PRECAUTIONS

Depo-Provera™ has some side effects and risks associated with its use. The following women should NOT take Depo-Provera™:

- if you are pregnant or suspect you might be pregnant
- have abnormal vaginal bleeding that has not been evaluated
- you are allergic to Depo-Provera™
- have a history of blood clots or strokes
- history of breast cancer or suspicion of breast cancer

-have liver dysfunction or liver disease

If you have or have had anorexia nervosa, migraine headaches, depression, kidney disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, liver disease, asthma or a seizure problem, please tell your medical provider. Depo-Provera™ may make these problems worse.

Use of Depo-Provera™ may cause you to lose calcium stored in your bones. Loss of calcium may cause weak, porous bones (osteoporosis) that could increase the risk of fracture. Therefore, the FDA suggests that you use Depo-Provera™ long-term (more than two years) ONLY if other methods of birth control are not adequate.

It is recommended that women who use Depo-Provera™ should not smoke.

RISKS/SIDE EFFECTS

- Not all of the side effects are serious, but it is important to realize that once the Depo-Provera™ is injected, it cannot be reversed or neutralized. You will have to tolerate the side effects until the medication wears off in three months.
- Irregular menstrual bleeding or spotting, heavier or lighter or absence of menstrual periods.
- Spotty darkening of the skin
- Hair loss
- Weight changes - most likely gain (average of 3-5 pounds during each year of use)
- Headache, dizziness, nervousness, increase in body hair, bloating, abdominal pain or cramps, weakness or fatigue
- Decreased sex drive
- Mood disturbance/mental depression
- Loss of calcium from bones

WARNING: If you have any of these problems following an injection of Depo-Provera™, notify your health care provider immediately and seek prompt medical attention:

- Vaginal discharge that has an unpleasant odor.
- Severe pain or tenderness in the lower abdominal area
- Persistent pain, pus, or bleeding at the injection site.
- Sharp chest pain, coughing up blood, or sudden shortness of breath (indicating a possible blood clot in the lung)
- Sudden severe headaches or vomiting, dizziness or fainting, problems with your eyesight or speech, weakness or numbness in an arm or leg (indicating a possible stroke)
- Severe pain or swelling in the calf (indicating a possible blood clot in the leg)
- A lump in your breast.
- Mood changes or depression.
- Unusually heavy vaginal bleeding

Student Health Center



WWW.SIU.EDU/~SHC

618-453-3311

This information is for educational purposes only. Consult your doctor for specific medical advice, diagnosis and treatment.

Dial-A-Nurse is available after-hours until 10:30 p.m. during fall and spring semesters. In case of emergency dial 911.