



August 2011

Depo-Provera

What is Depo-Provera?

Depo-Provera is an injection of the hormone progesterone, given every 10 to 13 weeks to prevent pregnancy.

How Depo-Provera works

- it stops your ovaries from releasing an egg each month.
- it makes the mucus in the cervix thicker thus making it harder for the sperm to travel into the uterus

How effective is Depo-Provera?

When given every 10 to 13 weeks, Depo-Provera is over 99 percent effective. In other words, in 100 females who use Depo-Provera according to instructions, approximately one female will get pregnant in one year.

You may want to use Depo-Provera if:

- you cannot or are having difficulty using other methods of birth control
- you have sickle cell disease, high blood pressure, severe migraine headaches
- you are over 35 and you smoke
- you are taking certain medications (e.g. Dilantin) that interfere with birth control pills

You should not use Depo-Provera if:

- you have an allergy to soya beans
- you may be pregnant
- you feel uncomfortable having irregular menstrual bleeding and/or no bleeding at all
- you plan to become pregnant within one to two years
- you are unable to return every 10 to 12 weeks for the injection
- you have medical problems such as undiagnosed vaginal bleeding, active liver disease, breast cancer or undiagnosed breast problems

Advantages and disadvantages of the Depo-Provera

Advantages

- does not interfere with sexual intercourse

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- does not require a daily contraceptive routine
- decrease or absence of menstrual bleeding
- safe to use during breastfeeding
- less chance of ovarian and endometrial cancer
- effectiveness is not affected by other common medications, e.g., antibiotics

Disadvantages

- irregular spotting or no period
- may cause an increase in your weight
- may lead to weakening of bones
- does not protect against sexually transmitted infections

Potential side effects of Depo-Provera

- depression
- headaches
- breast tenderness
- bloating
- increased thirst or urination
- decreased bone density

Depo-Provera warning signs

Tell your health care provider immediately if you develop any of the following:

- repeated, very painful headaches
- heavy bleeding
- depression
- severe, lower abdominal pain (may be a sign of pregnancy)

When can Depo-Provera be started?

- during the first five days of your period
- within the first five days following an abortion
- within the first five days after giving birth (if not breastfeeding)
- if breastfeeding, six weeks after childbirth, usually at the six-week postpartum visit with your health care provider

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