



What is Depo-Provera®?

Depo-Provera® is a very reliable method of birth control given by injection every three months. Depo-Provera® helps prevent pregnancy, but does not protect against Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs).

How Depo-Provera® works

The shot stops the ovaries from releasing an egg each month so you cannot get pregnant. It thickens cervical mucus and thins uterine lining.

Advantages

- more than 99 per cent effective
- does not need to be taken daily or used before sex
- after the first few months, less bleeding during menstrual periods
- can be used while breastfeeding
- most medications will not affect Depo-Provera®
- women over the age of 35 can use it
- may be suitable for women who require an estrogen-free method of contraception

Disadvantages

- Depo-Provera® does not protect against STIs
- Depo-Provera® is associated with a decrease in bone mineral density. For this reason, it is recommended when other birth control methods are not a good option
- although it is reversible — it delays resumption of ovulation

Where to get Depo-Provera®

- Public Health's Sexual Health Clinic provides birth control counselling and birth control sales, including Depo-Provera®.
- You can also get Depo-Provera® from your family doctor or Urgent Care Clinic.

How to use Depo-Provera®

- A health care provider will give you a shot in your arm or buttocks every three months (12 weeks).
- Pregnancy has to be ruled out before a shot can be given. To make sure you are not pregnant, your health care provider will prefer to give the first shot during the first five days of your period.
- If the first shot is not given at one of these times a back up method of birth control should be used for two weeks after the first shot.

Special warning

You should not use Depo-Provera® if:

- you are pregnant
- you have unexplained vaginal bleeding
- you have breast cancer
- there is anything wrong with your liver

Side effects of Depo-Provera®

The most common side effects are irregular bleeding and weight gain but they do not happen to every person who uses Depo-Provera®. Some hormonal side effects (e.g. headaches) have been reported but only occur in a small number of users.

Long-term use of Depo-Provera® can result in some loss of bone-density. Talk with your health care provider for more information and ways to improve "bone health".

Remember!

- Depo-Provera® does NOT protect against Sexually Transmitted Infections.
- Your best protection is to use Depo-Provera® with a condom.
- Talk to your health care provider to see if Depo-Provera® is right for you.

Sexual Health/Harm Reduction Program

For clinic times call 519-883-2267

All clinical and counselling services are free and confidential. No health card is required to receive services.

Questions?

Call the Region of Waterloo Public Health Sexual Health Program or your doctor.



Scan this code with your smartphone for more information about sexual health clinics and services.

Alternate formats of this document are available upon request.

Region of Waterloo Public Health and Emergency Services

Sexual Health/Harm Reduction Program

www.regionofwaterloo.ca/ph

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