

DEPO-PROVERA (“The Shot”)

Effectiveness (chances of NOT getting pregnant)

- More than 99%

What is Depo-Provera?

- It is an injection given every 3 months.
- It contains synthetic progesterone.
- It stops ovulation, and/or thickens the cervical mucus to prevent sperm from passing through.
- It is a reversible method of birth control given only by prescription.

Advantages of Depo-Provera

- Does not interfere with sex.
- Only need to get a shot 4 times a year.
- May stop menses or make them very light.
- Excellent alternative for women 35 and older who smoke.
- Reduces the risk of ovarian and endometrial cancer.

Disadvantages of Depo-Provera

- Irregular or unpredictable bleeding or spotting.
- Possible hair loss.
- Weight gain, especially right after pregnancy.
- It may delay your chances of getting pregnant after the shots are stopped. It can take between six and eighteen months for menstruation and ovulation to return consistently. This does not mean that you are protected from pregnancy during this time. Use alternate protection, such as condoms.
- Does not protect against sexually transmitted diseases (see warning below).
- You must go to the clinic or doctor’s office 4 times a year.

How Do I Decide?

- Is getting a shot a problem for you?
- Do you have any medical problems that will prevent you from taking Depo-Provera? Do you have liver disease, breast cancer or blood clots in your arms, legs or lungs?
- Do you have sex frequently or not very often, if not very often do you want extra hormones in your body all the time?
- Does this method fit with your religious, or moral beliefs?
- Is the Depo-Provera shot the best decision for you?
- Do you want to discuss this method with your clinician, family planning clinic staff, husband, partner, friend, or family member? In the Philadelphia area, click here for a list of local family planning clinics. Outside of Philadelphia, please click here for a clinic near you www.plannedparenthood.org.

REMINDER: This method does not provide any protection against sexually transmitted diseases (STD’s) including HIV and Hepatitis B. Using condoms consistently can help provide protection from STD’s.