

Facts About Injectable Contraception

Depot medroxyprogesterone acetate (DMPA) or “Depo” is an injectable drug that prevents pregnancy for 3 months (13 weeks) at a time. This birth control method is often called “the shot.” DMPA is a good choice for a woman who wants safe, reliable, reversible contraception.

How does Depo work?

Depo contains a female hormone (progestin) that stops an egg from being released by the ovary. The drug is injected into the arm or buttock muscle, where it is absorbed slowly. The contraceptive effects last for up to 3 months after the shot.

How effective is this birth control method?

Depo is *highly* effective. For every 100 women using DMPA, less than 1 per year will get pregnant. For Depo to work its best, women must get regular injections.

Does Depo cause cancer?

The World Health Organization has found that there is no higher risk of breast cancer or other cancers associated with Depo. In fact, Depo lowers a woman's risk of developing cancer of the lining of the womb (endometrial cancer).

What are the side effects?

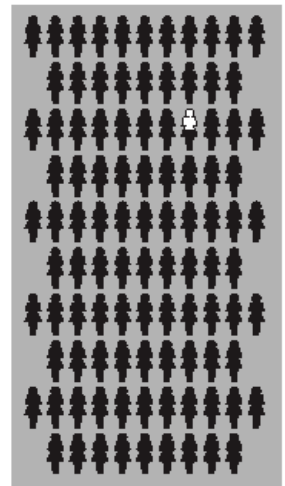
The most common side effects are menstrual changes. Although these changes are not always the same for every woman, they occur in almost all users of injectable contraception. Irregular bleeding and spotting are typical during the first few months. Women will likely need to use extra sanitary napkins or panty liners. The bleeding and spotting usually lessen over time.

After 1 year of use, at least 50% of women have no bleeding while they continue to get injections. Not bleeding is medically safe, and many women are happy not to have regular periods. Depo does not “turn off” periods like turning off a faucet. It changes bleeding patterns by thinning the lining of the uterus.

Weight gain is another common side effect that tends to continue with ongoing use. At the end of 1 year, the average weight gain is about 5 1/2 pounds; at the end of 2 years it is about 8 pounds. Some women may gain even more weight. Other possible side effects that have been reported include headache, breast tenderness, loss of sex drive, depression, nervousness, and tiredness.

If you experience these side effects, there is no way to reverse the Depo, until the Depo shot wears off.

Fewer than 1 in 100
Women Will Get
Pregnant per Year



Will Depo affect my bones?

Women who use Depo may experience a bone loss. Some of the bone that was lost may be regained when they stop using the injection for birth control.

In studies with teenagers, a 2-3% loss in bone was reported after one year. Although this bone loss may seem small, it is happening at a time when bone should be building up. And, like adult women, teens do not get all of the bone back that they lost while using the injection. Scientists do not know if there are any harmful effects on bone that would be seen later in a woman's life.

For that reason, your clinician may not recommend Depo as a long-term birth control method (for example longer than two years) unless no other method is adequate for you.







No matter what birth control method is chosen, every woman should make sure she gets enough calcium and vitamin D in her diet and through vitamin tablets.

How can I keep my bones strong and healthy?

Diet and exercise are the two most important factors for strong, healthy bones. Most Americans, particularly teenagers, do not get enough calcium, an essential bone nutrient. For young people, this low level of calcium intake can lead to a 5% to 10% lower peak bone mass. A common source of calcium is milk and dairy products. Drinking one 8-ounce glass of milk provides 300 milligrams (mg) of calcium. Teens need about four times this amount of calcium daily; adults need three times this much. In addition to calcium, other vitamins and minerals such as magnesium and vitamin D are important for bone health. (See table for more information.) Physical activity also helps build healthy bones. The more work your bones do, the stronger they get. The benefits of exercise are most pronounced in areas of the skeleton that bear the most weight, such as the hips during walking and running and the arms during gymnastics and upper-body weightlifting. Hiking, basketball, tennis, soccer, and dancing are also great forms of exercise for strong bones. For more information about diet and exercise plans that will keep your bones in top health, speak with your clinician.

Proper Nutrition for Healthy Bones

Many adolescent and adult women do not get enough of the nutrients needed for strong, healthy bones. The table below lists the recommended daily amounts and sources of important bone nutrients for teenage girls (ages 14 through 18 years) and adult women (ages 19 through 50 years). Multivitamins also contain many of these nutrients.

Nutrient	Recommended Daily Amount		Sources
Calcium	Teens: 1,300 mg/day Women: 1,000 mg/day		Milk and other dairy products, sardines, sesame seeds, fortified foods
Magnesium	Teens: 360 mg/day Women: 310-320 mg/day		Dairy products, nuts, whole grains, green leafy vegetables
Phosphorus	Teens: 1,250 mg/day Women: 700 mg/day		Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, dairy products, nuts, beans
Protein	Teens: 0.85 g/kg/day* Women: 0.80 g/kg/day*		Meat, poultry, fish, eggs, cheese, beans, lentils, nuts
Vitamin D	Teens: 5 mcg (200 IU)/day Women: 5 mcg (200 IU)/day		Fatty fish, egg yolks, fortified foods such as milk and cereal, exposure to sunlight
Vitamin K	Teens: 75 mcg/day Women: 90 mcg/day		Green leafy vegetables, liver, cheese, beans, nuts

*Amount per kilogram (2.2 pounds) of body weight. For example, a 140-pound woman should eat about 50 grams of protein each day.

Will Depo hurt my chances of getting pregnant in the future?

Depo does not have any permanent effects on a woman's ability to get pregnant. However, it may take longer for a woman to get pregnant after she stops using Depo than if other methods were used.

For example, one study found that in women who stopped using Depo and wished to become pregnant, 68% did so within 12 months, 83% within 15 months, and 93% within 18 months. Whether a delay in getting pregnant occurs depends on many factors, including a woman's health, age, and ability to get pregnant before she used Depo.



How often do I need to get Depo?

This type of birth control should be given every 3 months (13 weeks). You should schedule and keep your appointment for your shot before you leave the

clinic. If you wait more than 14 weeks to get your next shot, you will have to use another birth control method to protect yourself from getting pregnant. Your clinician may need to do a pregnancy test before you get your next shot.

How do I know if the Depo is right for me?

The shot is an effective contraceptive that can be used safely by most women. The shot does not protect against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) or HIV. Women at risk of STDs should also use a female condom or male latex condom to prevent disease. **You should not use the shot if:** you are pregnant or think you're pregnant, you have abnormal vaginal bleeding that has not been evaluated, or you have known or suspected breast cancer. Your clinician can give you more information and help you decide if that Depo is right for you.

WARNING SIGNS Report any of these signs to your clinician as soon as possible:

- Lump in your breast
- Yellowing of the skin or eyes
- Severe depression
- Severe pain in the stomach or abdomen
- Unusually heavy or prolonged bleeding from the vagina

What if I decide to stop using the Depo?

You may stop using Depo at any time. If you do not receive your shot at the end of 12 weeks, you should use another method of birth control if you do not want to become pregnant. Call the clinic if you want to discuss and/or receive another method of birth control. If you wish to become pregnant, there may be some delay in becoming pregnant. **Remember...regular exams for routine healthcare including screenings for sexually transmitted diseases and cancer are strongly recommended**

Questions??

If you have questions about side effects, or if you are unsure about using the shot-call the clinic right away!