



## ALL ABOUT THE BIRTH CONTROL SHOT



### What is the birth control shot?

The birth control shot (Depo-Provera®) is an injection that you get every 3 months to keep you from getting pregnant. It contains the hormone progesterin that keeps the eggs from leaving the ovaries. It also thickens the cervical mucus at the opening of the uterus so the sperm cannot get inside.



### How does the shot work?

There are two ways to get the shot:

- » From a health care provider
- » By self-injection

The self-injection (Depo-SubQ Provera 104) has a lower dose of the hormone than the shot given



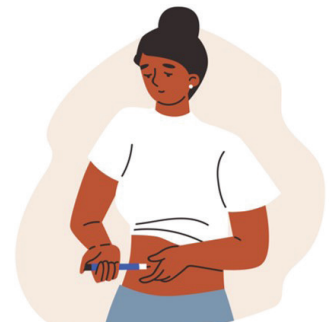
by your provider. If the first shot is given by the 5th day of your period, it starts to work right away. If you get the first shot after the 5th day of your period, use condoms as a back-up method of birth control for the first 7 days.

The shot keeps working for 13 weeks. You must go back to your provider or self-inject every 13 weeks.



### How is the shot given?

A health care provider gives you the shot in the muscle of the hip or arm. You may have soreness at the injection site. Self-injection is done with a tiny needle into the skin of the belly.



### What do people like about the shot?

- » It lasts for 13 weeks at a time
- » No need to think about birth control before having sex.
- » No pills to take every day.
- » No one can tell if you are using it.
- » Good method if you want to avoid estrogen.
- » Periods may be less painful.
- » After a few months, you may not get your period at all.



### What do people dislike about the shot?

- » There may be changes in your period.
- » Side effects can last for at least 13 weeks until the hormone wears off.
- » If you get your shot from a provider, you have to go back every 13 weeks.
- » Some people may experience weight gain.



## What if I'm late for my next shot?

- » If you are more than 2 weeks late for your next shot, you must use a back-up method (condoms) until you get your next shot, and for 7 days after you get the next shot.
- » If you are late for your shot and have had sex with no back-up method, you can use emergency contraception (EC) pills to prevent pregnancy.



## What are the side effects of the shot?

Everyone who uses the shot has changes in their menstrual bleeding. You may have:

- » periods that may occur at different times each month.
- » spotting between periods.
- » periods that occur less often.
- » periods that stop completely after using the shot for 12 months. This is not harmful.

There are other side effects with the shot:

- » Tiredness, breast tenderness, and nausea. This usually goes away after two months.
- » Weight gain. This is more likely in people who are already overweight.
- » Headaches, mood swings, acne, depressive moods, and higher or lower sex drive

Some side effects may not go away until the shot wears off. This could take 3-4 months or longer after your last shot. If you have any problems, talk to your Family PACT provider. Your provider may be able to help with the bleeding problems. For other side effects, you will have to wait until the shot wears off to feel better. You may need to choose another kind of birth control method.



## What are the warning signs of the shot?

Call your provider right away if you have sudden headaches, or repeated and painful headaches; heavy vaginal bleeding; depression; severe lower abdominal pain; redness, pain, itching, or bleeding at the injection site.

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## How well does the shot work?

The shot works very well to prevent pregnancy. Fewer than 1 in 100 sexually active women who use the shot for a year will get pregnant.



## Are there any downsides to the shot?

- » If you want to get pregnant after you quit using the shot, it may take 4-12 months after your last shot to get pregnant.
- » People who use the shot for a long time can lose strength in their bones. In most people, bone strength returns to normal after they stop using the method.
- » Taking calcium and vitamin D supplements and exercising daily may lessen the loss of calcium from your bones.
- » People who are breastfeeding can have the shot. Although no harmful effects have been seen in breastfed children, some experts recommend waiting for 6 weeks after childbirth before starting the shot.



## Who is not a good candidate for the shot?

The shot may not be safe for some people. Talk to your Family PACT provider about any health problems that you have like:

- » breast cancer treated in the past 5 years.
- » heart disease.
- » abnormal vaginal bleeding.
- » liver tumors or liver disease, like hepatitis or cirrhosis.
- » migraine headaches, depression, bone disease, or diabetes.

**The birth control shot does not protect against HIV or other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Use condoms when you have sex to protect yourself.**

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