

# FACT SHEET: THE SHOT/DEPO-PROVERA



## How does depo help me?

- Depo makes of your uterus thinner which results in lighter, shorter or no periods at all.
- The shot lowers your risk of cancer of the uterus.
- Depo is safe and effective birth control which protects you from pregnancy for 12-14 weeks. How does depo work?
- Depo is a shot that contains a hormone similar to the progestin made by the ovaries. It works mainly by making the mucus in your cervix too thick for sperm to pass through. If sperm cannot reach the egg, you cannot get pregnant.
- Women using Depo have reduced frequency of ovulation (releasing an egg from the ovary).
- After you stop Depo, it may take months for your fertility to return to normal. This means that it may take a while for you to get pregnant (even if you're trying) – but if you don't want to get pregnant, you need to use a new form of birth control after you stop Depo.
- No method of birth control is 100% effective, but Depo is 99% effective if you get your shots every 12-14 weeks.

## How will I feel on depo?

- Most women have regular or irregular bleeding during the first 6 months of use.
- After the first 6 months, you may have no period at all. This is normal.
- Side effects are uncommon. If one or more do occur, they often improve or resolve over the first few months of use. Examples include mood swings, reduced sex drive, increase in acne and breast discomfort.

## Will it make me gain weight?

- Depo can cause weight gain. Women may gain about 5 pounds per year for the first 3 years of use.
- Young women who already overweight are more likely to gain weight while taking Depo.

## Does depo have risks?

- Your bones are more likely to lose bone density while you take Depo, especially if used for more than two years in a row. FDA recommends no more than 2 years of use. This is usually reversible; it is not known if this has long-term health consequences.

The risks of blood clots are significantly lower in women using Depo as compared to birth control pills containing estrogen. If you have any of the symptoms below, call your health provider. These may be signs of a blood clot:

- A Abdominal pain (severe)
- C Chest pain or shortness of breath (severe)
- H Headaches which are severe (especially if different from your prior headache pattern)
- E Eye problems such as blurring or double vision
- S Severe depression
- S Swelling (usually painless) in one arm or leg (rarely: severe leg pain, fullness or "cord" behind knee)

## How do I minimize the risk of blood clots?

- Stay well hydrated, especially when travelling.
- Walk around (or at least stretch your legs) about every 2 hours when travelling or sitting for a long time (e.g. car or plane trips).
- Notify your healthcare provider about adjusting your medicine if you have an injury or surgery requiring prolonged bed rest or use of leg cast or boot.

### What hormones will NOT do:

Protect you from sexually transmitted infection, heartbreak, or having inappropriate postings put up about you on twitter™ and facebook™. It is YOUR responsibility to make appropriate sexual decisions and to recognize and avoid unhealthy relationships.

If you choose to touch naked people...  
**USE CONDOMS EVERYTIME**  
you have any kind of sexual contact

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## How do I start Depo?

There are 2 ways to start Depo:

- Quick start:** Pick up your prescription. Schedule an appointment as soon as possible to receive the injection.
- Next period:** Pick up your prescription. Contact your doctor's office as soon as you begin your period. Schedule an appointment within 5 days of the start of your period.

## When does the DEPO start protecting against pregnancy?

- If you get your first injection during the first 5 days of your period, you are protected against pregnancy **right away**.
- If you get your first injection more than 5 days after the **start** of your period, **you should use condoms as back-up for the first 7 days**.
- GTW recommends condoms for birth control backup for the first pack and on-going for disease protection.

## How do I use depo?

- You get a Depo injection in the arm or in the buttocks every 12 weeks.

## What if I am late for the next shot?

- Depo works best if you get a new injection every 12 weeks.
- If your shot is more than 2 weeks late, you should get a pregnancy test before the next shot. You should use condoms for the next 7 days.

## What if I am late getting a shot and had unprotected sex?

- **If your last shot was more than 14 weeks ago, take Emergency Contraception (EC) right after unprotected sex.** EC can prevent pregnancy up to 5 days after sex, and it works better the sooner you take it.
- Available at pharmacies, health centers, health care providers or go to [www.not-2-late.com](http://www.not-2-late.com) to find a source near you. Call ahead to be sure they have it in stock.
- Get a pregnancy test and, possibly, a pelvic exam within two weeks to be sure that the EC worked and that you did not get a sexually transmitted infection.

## How do I get a prescription refill?

- Pick up your medication from the pharmacy and bring to your 3 month follow-up appointment. We will check your blood pressure and monitor for any side effects or problems with your prescription. You will receive a prescription refill at that time.
- Our physicians require appointments for medical examination and medication follow up every 6 to 12 months in order to provide ongoing refills of your contraceptive medication.
- If a physician appointment is not required, pick up your medication from the pharmacy and bring to your 3 month appointment for insertion.
- Please allow 5 business days for all refill requests. You must call our office. We do not accept refill requests from the pharmacy.

# CONSENT TO USE HORMONAL MEDICATION (HM)

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Patient Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ Today's Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Please initial your understanding and agreement with the following:

Patient/Parent (if applicable)

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

### Contraindications

I understand that I may not be able to use HM containing estrogen, if I have had or develop in the future: blood clots, inflammation in the veins, or migraine with neurological signs or vision changes. I agree that if in the future I develop these problems or if I develop high blood pressure or high cholesterol, I will speak with my doctor about possibly discontinuing HM.

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

### Efficacy

I understand that HM are very effective methods of birth control but that occasionally women might become pregnant while taking it. I know there is less of a chance of this happening if I take it correctly and do not skip or miss taking my doses.

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

### Backup Contraception

HM may not prevent pregnancy in the first month of use. I agree to use a back-up method (condoms) for pregnancy prevention if needed for this purpose during the first month of use.

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

### Condoms Are Required

I understand that HM does not offer protection from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) such as herpes, HPV, chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, trichomonas, or HIV-AIDS. I understand that condoms used each and every time for *all types of sexual encounters* are the only way to decrease the risk of getting STIs.

\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_

### Medication Interaction

I understand that HM may provide less protection from pregnancy when taken with other medications (including those that control seizures, e.g. Topamax, and some antibiotics, e.g. rifampin). I will have discussed my medicines with my doctors and will inform them of any medication changes in the future.

[\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_]

### [For Depo-Provera only] – Low Bone Density Risk

I understand rare cases of low bone density (weakening bone strength) including bone fractures have been reported in women taking the Depo-Provera shot. For this reason the FDA states the shot should not be taken for more than 2 years continuously unless other approved methods are not available.

*I have read and/or discussed how to use HM, as well as the benefits and side-effects, with my health care provider and have had the opportunity to have any questions addressed.*

Patient: \_\_\_\_\_  
Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Parent: \_\_\_\_\_  
(if patient < 18) Print Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature