

FACT SHEET : THE SHOT/DEPO-PROVERA

Remember,
Depo **does not**
protect you
from Sexually
Transmitted
Infections or HIV.

Always use
condoms to
protect yourself!



HOW DOES DEPO WORK?

- Depo contains a hormone like the ones your body makes. This hormone stops your ovaries from releasing eggs. Without an egg, you cannot get pregnant.
- No method of birth control is 100% effective. If you get all of your shots on time, Depo is 99% effective. If you are late for a shot, Depo is 91% effective.

HOW DO I USE DEPO?

- You get a Depo injection in the arm or in the buttocks.
- **Use condoms as back-up the first 7 days** after your first shot of Depo.
- You should get a shot every 3 months (every 12 weeks).

WHAT IF I AM LATE FOR THE NEXT SHOT?

- Depo works best if you get a new shot every 12 weeks.
- If your shot is more than 4 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 16 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.

HOW DOES DEPO HELP ME?

- Depo is safe and effective. It keeps you from getting pregnant for 3 months.
- The shot lowers your risk of cancer of the uterus.
- It is safe to breastfeed while on Depo.

HOW WILL I FEEL ON DEPO?

- You will most likely have spotting between periods. You may have weight gain, bloating, headaches and/or mood changes. Talk to your health care provider about treating any side effects.
- After the first 2-3 shots, you may have *no period at all*. This is normal.
- Your bones may become slightly weaker while you take Depo. Bone strength returns to normal once you stop getting the shot.
- After you stop Depo, it takes a few 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.

DOES DEPO HAVE RISKS?

- The shot is very safe. Severe problems are rare. If you have any of the symptoms below, call your doctor:
 - Severe headaches
 - Very heavy bleeding
- Your health care provider can help you find out if these symptoms are signs of a severe problem.

