



## The Shot/Depo-Provera Fact Sheet

**How does Depo work?** Depo contains a hormone similar to 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 96% 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. Some people who take testosterone prefer to avoid methods that contain estrogen, and Depo only contains the hormone progestin. 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 clinician 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 after 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 clinician:

- Severe headaches
- Very heavy bleeding

Your clinician can help you determine if these symptoms are signs of a severe problem.

Remember, Depo does not protect you from Sexually Transmitted Infections or HIV. Always use condoms to protect yourself!