

Depo Provera

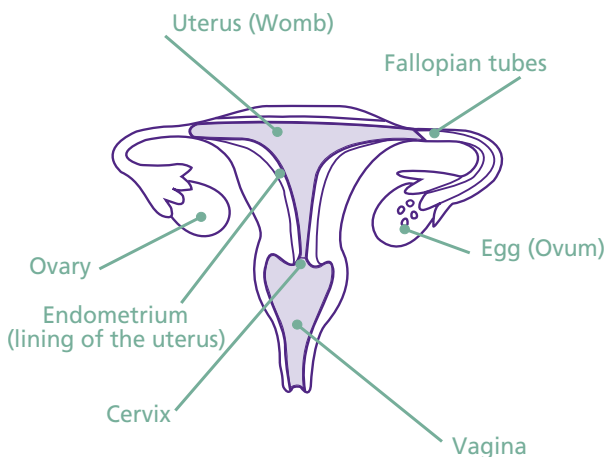
Family Planning provides confidential and non-judgemental sexual and reproductive health and education services. Please contact us for further information.

What is Depo Provera?

Depo Provera (“the injection”, DP) is a contraceptive injection containing progestogen. This hormone is similar to one of the hormones produced naturally by a woman’s ovaries. The injection is given every 12 weeks.

How does it work?

It prevents pregnancy by stopping the ovaries releasing an egg each month. Also there are changes to the lining of the womb (endometrium).



How well does it work?

Depo Provera is almost 100% effective if you have your injections on time (every 12 weeks). This means that less than 1 out of 100 women will get pregnant each year.

What will I notice?

Some women have irregular or prolonged bleeding, especially in the first 3 to 6 months. This is safe for your body and there are pills to stop this if it happens.

Most women (70%) will have no periods after 4 injections. This is safe.

Becoming pregnant after stopping

Your natural fertility can take some time to return to normal (on average 6 months, but it can take up to 1 year). If you are planning a pregnancy soon it may be best not to use Depo Provera. If you get pregnant while using Depo Provera, and decide to continue with your pregnancy, the chance of having an abnormal baby is not increased.

Who can use it?

Almost all women can use Depo Provera, even women who cannot use the combined contraceptive pill (“the pill”).

Who should not use it?

- Women who have had breast cancer
- Women who are planning a pregnancy in the next few months may prefer to use a different type of contraceptive.

What are the advantages?

IT WORKS

Depo Provera is almost 100% effective.

It is convenient

- lasts for 12 weeks
- no daily pill taking
- doesn't interfere with sexual intercourse
- no one else needs to know you are using it.

PROTECTION

Depo Provera reduces the risk of endometrial cancer (cancer of the lining of the womb) by 80%.

OTHER POSSIBLE ADVANTAGES

It often helps women who have heavy or painful periods.

What are the disadvantages?

Once you have had an injection of Depo Provera the contraceptive effects last at least 12 weeks. Other effects may last for a short time or for even longer.

INITIAL IRREGULAR OR PROLONGED BLEEDING

Some women have irregular or prolonged bleeding. This is more common on first starting to use Depo Provera and often improves with time.

POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS

- Weight changes: some women put on weight, some lose weight, most do not change weight
- Allergic reaction: extremely rare.

The research does NOT show that the injection causes any change in mood, libido or headache.

BONE DENSITY

Depo Provera has been associated with a reduction in bone density. This improves after stopping Depo Provera.

Risk factors for low bone density include: excessive exercise, very low weight, family history of osteoporosis, smoking, steroid use, malabsorption, poor diet (low in calcium).

Protective factors are: not smoking, weight bearing exercise, good diet (high in calcium), moderate sunshine.

CANCER

The risk of endometrial cancer is reduced by 80%.

There is no overall change in the rate of cancer of the cervix, the ovary or breast cancer.

Does the injection protect you from sexually transmissible infections (STIs)?

No. You need to use condoms (and lubricant) as well to protect against STIs

For more information about Family Planning resources, clinics and health promotion services go to our website, familyplanning.org.nz