What is Depo-Provera®?
Depo-Provera® is an injectable (given by needle) form of hormones similar to the natural progesterone made by your ovaries each month. It is used to prevent pregnancy.

How does Depo-Provera® work?
Depo-Provera® prevents pregnancy by:
1. Preventing an egg from leaving your ovary so fertilization does not take place.
2. Changing the lining of your uterus so it cannot receive a fertilized egg.
3. Making the mucus in your cervix (opening of the uterus) thicker and harder for sperm to get through.

How well does Depo-Provera® work?
Depo-Provera® is more than 99% effective in preventing pregnancy when taken every 12 weeks.
How do I get Depo-Provera®?

• Talk with your primary health care provider to check whether Depo-Provera® is right for your health and birth control needs. You will need to get a prescription filled, make an appointment with your primary health care provider, and bring the medicine to your appointment.

• Your primary health care provider will give you an injection of Depo-Provera® in your hip or arm every 12 weeks (4 times a year).

When does Depo-Provera® start working?

• Depo-Provera® starts working right away if you get it within 5 days after starting your period, or within 5 days after having an abortion or giving birth.

• If you get Depo-Provera® at other times in your cycle, it is not fully effective for 2 weeks. Use a back-up method of birth control (such as a condom and spermicide), or wait to have sex for 2 weeks.
Pros of Depo-Provera®:

• It is very effective in preventing pregnancy (99.7%).
• It is easier to remember than taking birth control pills daily.
• It is private – no one will know that you are using birth control.
• There are no hormonal side effects.
• It is cheaper than the pill.
• It is not affected by other medications.
• It can be taken by women who smoke and are 35 or older.
• It can be taken by women who are breastfeeding 6 weeks after giving birth, once their milk supply has been established.
• It lowers the risk of getting cancer of the endometrium (lining of the uterus).
• After several injections, you may have lighter periods or no periods at all.
• It lowers the risk of anemia (blood is low in red blood cells or hemoglobin, or there is not enough blood) because your period flow is lighter.
Cons of Depo-Provera®:

It is possible that you may have the following side effects for up to 3 months:

› irregular bleeding during your cycle
› skin rashes or acne (pimples)
› weight gain, up to 5 pounds each year (some women (1 in 5) lose weight)
› thinning of your bones
› mood changes or depression
› less interest in sex
› a slight increase in the risk of breast cancer

• You can get pregnant if you are more than 1 week late getting your next injection.

• After stopping Depo-Provera®, it may take up to 1 year to get pregnant, although it may happen sooner.

• Depo-Provera® does not protect you from sexually transmitted infections (STIs).
Who should not take Depo-Provera®?
You should not take Depo-Provera® if you:
› are pregnant
› want to become pregnant within 1 year
› have unexplained vaginal bleeding
› have ongoing liver problems (such as hepatitis C)
› have a known allergy to Depo-Provera® or any of its parts
› have new lumps in your breasts that have not been checked by a primary health care provider
› have risk factors for osteoporosis (thinning of the bones). Talk with your primary health care provider about your risk for osteoporosis if you also smoke, eat a low calcium diet, do not exercise, and/or are planning to take Depo-Provera® for a long time.

If you have any change in your health or the way you feel while taking Depo-Provera®, see your primary health care provider.
Remember:
Your next injection is due in 12 weeks.
• Schedule your next injection a few weeks early if you know you will be away when your next injection is due.
• Not having a period does not mean you are pregnant, unless you have pregnancy symptoms or are more than one week late for your next injection.

Will Depo-Provera® protect me from sexually transmitted infections (STIs)?
• Depo-Provera® will not protect you from sexually transmitted infections such as herpes, chlamydia, genital warts, gonorrhea, or HIV (the virus that causes AIDS).
• Use a condom every time you have sex to protect against STIs.

We recommend that you see your primary health care provider once a year for a breast exam, pelvic exam, and Pap smear.
For more information:

- Read the booklet that comes with your package of Depo-Provera®.
- Visit The Society of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists at:
  › www.sexandu.ca/contraception/hormonal-contraception/#tc5