



Patient & Family Guide
2019

Depo-Provera[®]

Aussi disponible en français :
Depo-Provera[®] (FF85-2016)



www.nshealth.ca

Depo-Provera®

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

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientGuides>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

www.nshealth.ca

Prepared by: Nova Scotia Women's Choice Clinic

Designed by: NSHA Library Services

The information in this brochure is for informational and educational purposes only.

The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

WP85-0112 © April 2019 Nova Scotia Health Authority

The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.