

# USER GUIDE: DEPO-PROVERA SUB-Q: THE DO-IT-YOURSELF SHOT

Remember, Depo does not protect you from Sexually Transmitted Infections or HIV. If you are looking for protection from STIs and HIV, both the internal and external condom are great options!



## HOW DOES DEPO WORK?

- Depo contains a hormone, called progestin, similar to the one your body makes. While using Depo, it stops your ovaries from releasing eggs. Without an egg, you cannot get pregnant.
- No method of birth control works 100%. 4 out of 100 people using Depo for a year get pregnant.

## HOW DO I USE DEPO?

- Give yourself a Depo shot in the belly or thigh.
- Use condoms as a backup for 7 days after your first shot of Depo.
- Give yourself the shot every 3 months (every 13 weeks).
- You can store Depo at room temperature.

## WHEN IS THE NEXT SHOT CONSIDERED LATE?

- Depo works best if you take a new shot every 13 weeks.
- Depo still works if you are two weeks late for your next shot.

## WHAT IF I AM LATE TAKING A SHOT AND HAD UNPROTECTED SEX?

- If your last shot was more than 15 weeks ago, consider taking Emergency Contraception (EC) right away. EC can prevent pregnancy up to 5 days after sex, and it works better the sooner you take it.
- It can take up to 2 weeks after having unprotected sex before a pregnancy test turns positive.
- You can still take the next shot. Depo won't harm an early pregnancy.
- Make sure to take a pregnancy test 2 weeks after you've had unprotected sex. Depo changes the timing of your period and can make it hard to know when you're pregnant.

## WHAT IF I AM LATE TAKING A SHOT AND DID NOT HAVE UNPROTECTED SEX?

- If you haven't had unprotected sex, it's fine if you're late for your next shot. Use a back-up method (like condoms or abstinence) for 7 days.

## WHAT DO PEOPLE LIKE ABOUT DEPO SUB-Q: THE DO-IT YOURSELF SHOT?

- Depo is safe and effective birth control. It prevents pregnancy 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.
- Depo is safe while breast/chestfeeding.
- You can take it yourself at home.

## HOW WILL DEPO AFFECT ME?

- You won't have a regular cycle. You may have spotting between periods, you may have no period at all, or you may bleed longer than you normally do on your period. After you stop Depo, it can take up to a year for your period to return to normal.
- You may have weight gain, bloating, headaches, and/or mood changes. Talk to your clinician about treating side effects.
- Your bones may become slightly thinner while you take Depo. This generally goes back to normal once you stop taking the shot. Talk to your clinician if you are concerned about your fracture risk.
- For many people it can take months for fertility to return to normal after stopping Depo. If you want to get pregnant in the next year, Depo may not be the best method to choose now.
- If you don't want to get pregnant, you can use a new form of birth control after stopping Depo.

## WHERE CAN I GET DEPO SUB-Q: THE DO-IT YOURSELF SHOT?

- Available at pharmacies with a prescription from your clinician.
- Your clinician may also be able to give it to you directly.

continued on the other side →



# USER GUIDE: DEPO-PROVERA SUB-Q: THE DO-IT-YOURSELF SHOT

## IS DEPO SAFE?

- 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 find out if these are signs of a severe problem.

## HOW DO I INJECT DEPO?

### Diagram 1

- Gather your supplies: alcohol pad, Depo package with syringe and needle, and sharps container or empty plastic laundry soap jug.
- Wash your hands.
- Pick the injection site: either upper thigh or belly. Avoid your belly button and bony areas.
- Gently wipe your skin with an alcohol pad and wait for the area to dry.

### Diagram 2

- Take the syringe out of the package and shake it for about one minute to mix it.
- Remove the cap from the tip of the syringe.

### Diagram 3

- Take the needle out of the package and attach the needle to the syringe.
- Move the safety shield away from the needle.
- Remove the plastic needle cover from the needle. Pull it straight off. (Do not twist it.)
- Hold the needle pointing up. Gently push the plunger until the medicine reaches the top.

### Diagram 4

- Grab the skin around the injection site with your other hand.

### Diagram 5

- Push the small needle all the way into this skin at about a 45-degree angle. This hurts a bit.
- Inject the Depo slowly, over 5-7 seconds. Push the plunger all the way in.
- Pull the syringe out. Push the safety shield back until it clicks. Dispose of the syringe in the sharps container.
- Lightly apply a clean gauze or an adhesive bandage if there is any bleeding. Do not rub the area.

