

SAGINAW COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT
PERSONAL AND PREVENTIVE HEALTH SERVICES
FAMILY PLANNING

DEPO-PROVERA (DMPA) FACT SHEET

Depo-Provera is a chemical about the same as the body's natural hormone, progesterone. It works by preventing the ovary from producing an egg each month, and if no egg is produced, you cannot get pregnant. It also causes changes in the lining of the uterus. The lining thins causing periods to be irregular or absent.

EFFECTIVENESS:

- The shot is 99.7% effective – as effective as having your tubes tied or cut, except the surgery is permanent and the shot is not.

USE:

- The Depo-Provera shot is given to you by a nurse at the SCHD Family Planning Clinic.
- The first shot is routinely given to you during the first seven (7) days of your period. Other start dates may be indicated with clinic approval.
- One shot lasts for 90 days (3 months).
- It is important that you return on time for each shot for continued protection from pregnancy.
- The nurse will give you a card telling you when to return for your next shot.
- Emergency contraception (EC) is available if you had sex after missing or getting the shot late.

BENEFITS:

- DMPA has been found to decrease the frequency of grand mal seizures and sickle cell crisis.
- DMPA is not affected by drugs that interfere with other methods of hormonal birth control.
- You do not have to remember to take it every day.
- Less menstrual cramps and pain, less or no monthly bleeding.
- Less risk of endometrial and ovarian cancer.
- Lessens the risk of pelvic inflammatory disease and ectopic pregnancy.
- Provides 3 months of protection after each injection.

DISCONTINUATION:

- If you are more than one day late for your injection, use a back-up method of contraception. If unprotected intercourse occurs, emergency contraception is available at the Family Planning Clinic.
- If you discontinue DMPA and do not want to become pregnant, start using a birth control method 13 weeks after your last shot.
- If you discontinue DMPA and want to become pregnant, remember that the contraceptive effect may take a number of months to go away.

SIDE EFFECTS:

- Irregular menstrual bleeding
- No periods
- Weight Gain
- Headaches
- Nervousness
- Stomach pain or cramps
- Weakness or tiredness
- Lower sex drive
- Decrease in bone density with long term use
- Depression
- Breast tenderness
- Dizziness
- No hair growth or excessive hair loss

***Side effects usually lessen with time**

WARNING SIGNS:

- Painful headaches
- Heavy bleeding
- Depression
- Pus or pain at the injection site
- Severe lower abdominal pain

RISKS AND COMPLICATIONS:

- Decreased bone density

*In order to avoid this complication, clients are encouraged to do the following:

- Exercise regularly and vigorously.
- Take adequate calcium (1300 – 1500 mg/day) and vitamin D (400 – 800 IU/day) to prevent bone loss.
- Quit smoking. Smoking can cause a decrease in bone density; therefore, smoking cessation is encouraged.

Depo-Provera

Use of Depo-Provera (DMPA) may cause you to lose calcium stored in your bones. The longer you use DMPA the more calcium you are likely to lose. The calcium may not return completely once you stop using DMPA.

Loss of calcium may cause weak, porous bones (osteoporosis) that could increase the risk that your bones might break, especially after menopause. It is not known whether your risk of developing osteoporosis may be greater if you are a teenager when you start to use DMPA.

You should use DMPA long term (for example, more than two years) ONLY if other methods of birth control are not right for you.

**Remember, Depo-Provera does not protect against any sexually transmitted infections.
It is important to use condoms each time you have sex.**

PERSONAL HEALTH CENTER

989-758-3870

Visit our website: www.saginawpublichealth.org



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References: Hatcher, R.A., et al, (2018) Contraceptive Technology (21st Edition)
New York, NY: Irvington Publishers, Inc.
Quality Family Planning Services & Contraceptive Guidelines for Michigan Family Planning Providers (2023)

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