Depo-Provera
Depot-Medroxyprogesterone Acetate (DMPA)

Depo-Provera is an injection (shot) that protects a woman from becoming pregnant for 3 months. It is a safe method of birth control that works well and can be reversed, meaning you can stop taking the shots if you wish to become pregnant.

How Depo-Provera works
Depo-Provera contains medroxyprogesterone that is like the hormone progesterone made by your ovaries that:
- Stops the egg cells in your ovaries from growing and being released.
- Causes changes in the lining of your uterus making pregnancy less likely to happen.
- Thickens secretions from the cervix making it harder for sperm to reach the egg.
Depo-Provera is more than 99% effective, meaning there is less than 1 pregnancy a year for every 100 women using it.

Using Depo-Provera
- Depo-Provera should be started on the 1st day of your period or right after you give birth to a baby to make sure you are not pregnant.
- You need to get a shot every 12 weeks (or 4 times each year). The shot is most often given in your arm or buttocks.
- If you miss your next shot, you may become pregnant. You should use another form of birth control until you get your next shot.
- Most women who wish to become pregnant after stopping the shots have become pregnant within 12 to 18 months.
- **Do not use Depo-Provera** if you are pregnant, have liver problems, any type of female cancer, or unusual vaginal bleeding.

Changes to your period
Depo-Provera causes changes in menstrual bleeding (period) for most women. These changes are normal and do not cause a problem. They may include:
- Less menstrual bleeding than is normal for you.
- Spotting that is not regular or you may stop having a period. This does not mean you are pregnant.
Heavy bleeding is not typical. Call your health care provider if this happens.
Possible side effects
Some women have minor side effects that often lessen or go away. If any of these bother you or do not go away, talk to your health care provider or pharmacist. These may include:

- Headache
- Gaining weight
- Hair loss
- Acne
- Less sex drive
- Feeling nervous
- Feeling depressed

Using Depo-Provera can cause loss of bone thickness. The longer it is used, the more bone may be lost. Most often, the loss is small and bone thickness increases again once Depo-Provera is stopped. There is a risk that the amount of calcium in your bones may not return to normal. Talk to your health care provider about how to build healthy bones, such as with diet and exercise.

Other important things to know

- Tell your doctor about any medicines you take. Include any prescription or over the counter medicines, herbal products, or vitamins. One medicine, called aminoglutethimide and sold under the brand name Cytadren, can decrease the effects of Depo-Provera.
- Breastfeeding women can use Depo-Provera. There have been no harmful effects reported in babies whose mothers were on this medicine while breastfeeding.
- Depo-Provera does not protect you against sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Correct use of condoms will protect against many STIs.

Ask your health care provider or pharmacist if you have any questions.