

Bone health is important to all women.

Eating foods high in calcium and getting plenty of exercise helps keep bones healthy.

Foods that have a lot of calcium are milk, yogurt, cheese, salmon, shrimp and broccoli.

Exercises that can help make your bones strong are walking, running and climbing stairs.

Your healthcare provider may want you to take a pill with calcium in it.

### **Stopping Depo Provera:**

A woman can stop taking the shots at any time.

If you stop the shots because you want to get pregnant, you might be able to get pregnant immediately. It can take some women up to two to three years after stopping Depo Provera before they get pregnant.

We cannot predict how soon you will be able to get pregnant. This is important to know as you plan the timing of your future pregnancies.

### **You should seek medical attention if you have:**

- Sudden severe headaches that start after you start taking Depo Provera
- Sharp chest pain or sudden shortness of breath
- Blood when you cough
- Vomiting
- Dizziness or fainting
- Problems with your eyesight or speech
- Weakness or numbness in an arm or leg
- Depression
- Heavy vaginal bleeding
- Severe pain in your lower abdomen
- Severe pain or swelling in your calf
- Persistent pain, pus or bleeding where you got the shot.

Depo Provera does not protect you from sexually transmitted infections or HIV/AIDS.

We will be glad to answer any questions you have about Depo Provera. Call us at \_\_\_\_\_.

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[www.scdhec.gov/familyplanning](http://www.scdhec.gov/familyplanning)

# USING DEPO PROVERA

Depot Medroxyprogesterone Acetate

South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control



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[www.scdhec.gov](http://www.scdhec.gov)

*We promote and protect the health of the public and the environment.*

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# USING

## Depo Provera

### What is Depo Provera?

Depo Provera is a birth control method that contains the hormone progesterone.

### How does it work?

Depo Provera works in several ways. It can prevent the egg's release from the woman's ovaries. It can make cervical mucus thicker, and it can change the lining of the uterus so the egg cannot attach.

Depo Provera is given as a shot. If you receive the first shot during the first 5 days of your period, you are protected from a pregnancy right away. If you get the shot at any other time, your health care provider will talk to you about using a back-up birth control method.

The shot is given in either the upper arm or buttocks every 11-13 weeks. Most women say it does not hurt much.

If you want to use Depo Provera as your birth control method, you must return to the clinic for another shot every 11-13 weeks. Keep track of your appointment on a calendar.

### How well does it work?

Depo Provera is 99% effective in preventing pregnancy. It is not a permanent method of birth control.

### Is it safe?

Depo Provera is safe for most women, but there are women who cannot use it. You might not be able to use Depo Provera if you:

- have an allergy to any ingredients in Depo Provera
- have unexplained vaginal bleeding
- have had blood clots
- have had breast cancer
- have had liver disease
- have had a heart attack or coronary artery disease
- have had a stroke.

**Women who use Depo Provera should not smoke.** The effects of cigarette smoking on women using Depo Provera are not fully known.

### What are the side effects?

Most women who use Depo Provera have a change in their monthly period. Some women might have a longer period, irregular bleeding or spotting, or no period at all. Over half of the women will stop having periods after using Depo Provera for a year.

Most women do not have problems with Depo Provera, but some women can have:

- headaches
- nervousness
- weight gain or loss



- dizziness
- weakness
- stomach discomfort
- tiredness
- hair loss or growth
- lower sex drive
- nausea
- a decrease in "good" cholesterol.

If taken during pregnancy, there is a slight chance of having a low birth weight baby. If you think you might be pregnant, talk with your health care provider before you get a Depo Provera shot.

Depo Provera can lower the amount of calcium in your bones. It might weaken your bones temporarily if taken for a long time (more than two years). When Depo Provera is stopped, the calcium in bones begins to come back, but some women can have long term effects. These can include weakened or broken bones, particularly later in life.