

Contraceptive Injection

(Depo)

What is Depo?

Depo is the popular name for hormonal contraceptive injection *Medroxyprogesterone acetate*.

Depo contains a progestogen which is similar to the hormone progesterone, which is naturally produced by the female body.

Depo is injected into a muscle every 12 weeks & is slowly absorbed into the bloodstream to prevent pregnancy. It is 96% - 99.8% effective.

There are two brands of Depo available in Australia: *Depo-Provera* and *Depo-Ralovera*.

How does Depo work?

Depo works by:

- preventing ovulation (egg release from the ovaries), and
- thickening the mucus of the cervix so that the sperm cannot enter the uterus (womb)

It may take up to seven days to start working. If you are late having the injection, the effectiveness of Depo in preventing pregnancy is reduced.

Where can I get Depo?

Starting Depo for the first time requires an assessment by a doctor and getting a prescription (script).

Assessments & scripts can be obtained from Family Planning Tasmania clinics or your doctor.

Once you get the Depo from the pharmacy, you need to make another appointment with a doctor to have the injection.

Is Depo right for me?

You may not be able to have a Depo injection if you have:

- liver disease
- difficulty with intramuscular injections

- cardiovascular disease
- plans to become pregnant within 6-12 months
- diabetes
- difficulty in tolerating changes in your periods, or
- depression.

Depo is not suitable if you have:

- an allergy to Depo
- breast cancer & some other forms of cancer, or
- low bone density.

Advantages

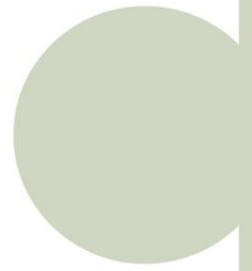
- between 96-99.8% effective
- cost-effective and long acting (up to 12 weeks)
- most users will have no periods or very light bleeding during their periods
- period pain & discomfort may be reduced
- can be used while breastfeeding, and
- an alternative for those who cannot have the hormone oestrogen.


Disadvantages

- If you are late getting your injection, it may not work.
- It is impossible to reverse the effects of an injection once it is given.
- If side effects occur, they may last up to three months.
- There could be a delay in return to fertility. On average, the delay is about nine months from the last Depo injection.

Potential side effects

- periods can stop completely in 50% to 60% of users
- irregular or spot bleeding
- prolonged bleeding, which usually improves with time



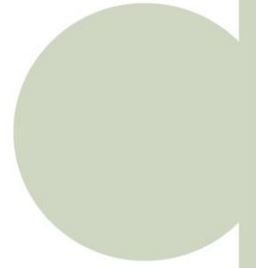
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- heavy bleeding
 - headaches
 - skin changes
 - bloating
 - tender breasts
 - mood changes
 - around 20% of users will gain some weight

There are medications that may help with prolonged/heavy bleeding. Contact your doctor.

What else do I need to know?

- At your assessment the doctor will assess your suitability for Depo.
- A pregnancy test is usually carried out during the initial assessment.
- The first injection is usually given during the first five days of your menstrual period. This is to ensure that you are not pregnant.
- In some cases, it is necessary to use condoms for seven days after the injection.
- Your doctor will review your risks for loss of bone density while you are using Depo.
- Follow-up injections are given every 12 weeks to continue protection against pregnancy. To renew your script, you will need to be reviewed by a doctor every six months.
- Depo does not protect you against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or blood borne viruses.

For more information, support & advice, visit www.fpt.asn.au.



Family Planning Tasmania acknowledges the contribution of Family Planning Victoria in the development of this fact sheet.

Disclaimer: This content is provided for general information and education purposes only and does not take into account individual circumstances. It is not to be relied on in substitution for specific advice from a medical professional and Family Planning Tasmania does not accept responsibility for such use. Family Planning Tasmania has taken every effort to ensure that the information is up to date and accurate, however information and knowledge is subject to change. Family Planning Tasmania advises that you always consult a medical professional for individual advice.