

What is Depo Provera?

Depo Provera is an injectable progestin that is approved for use as a method of contraception in over 90 countries around the world. It was approved for use in the United States in 1992.

Depo Provera works by:

- ⇒ suppressing ovulation (release of eggs).
- ⇒ increasing the thickness of cervical mucus, making it more difficult for sperm to pass into the upper reproductive tract.
- ⇒ altering the lining of the uterus.

Depo Provera is administered via a deep intramuscular injection or shot that a woman receives once every three months. The first shot of Depo Provera a woman receives must be administered within three days of the onset of menstruation. After the initial shot, a woman must return every three months to receive another injection. A pregnancy test is administered prior to the initial injection and in cases where a woman is late in receiving her next injection.

Effectiveness

Depo Provera is an effective method of contraception with a first year failure rate of 0.3%. This means that if 100 women used Depo Provera for one full year, 0.3% would become pregnant. Approximately 70% of women continue using Depo Provera after one year.

Costs

Costs vary, but on average a vial of the medication costs around \$50.00 in a retail pharmacy. Student Health Service carries Depo Provera at a reduced cost. One vial equals one shot. This may sound like a large cost, but remember, one shot lasts for three months. Therefore, Depo Provera can cost as little as \$14.00 per month, equaling around \$170.00 per year. It is important to consider that some agencies, clinics, and doctor's offices may charge an additional fee for administering the shot. This additional fee varies greatly and women are encouraged to determine in advance if their health care organization charges this fee. In addition to the added charges for administering the shot, there are usually additional charges for pregnancy tests. The ECU Student Health Service will administer the shot free of charge, and pregnancy tests are provided at the lowest cost possible.

Advantages of Depo Provera

- ◆ There is no estrogen, which makes this a good option for women who experience negative side effects from estrogen-containing contraceptives.
- ◆ Women typically experience little or no menstrual period. Up to 50% of women on Depo Provera stop having their period six months to a year after use. There is no health risk associated with an absence in a menstrual period due to using Depo Provera.

- ◆ Women may experience a decreased risk for anemia (iron deficiency), menstrual cramping, and a decrease in the pain associated with endometriosis.
- ◆ A decreased risk of developing pelvic inflammatory disease, certain cancers such as endometrial and ovarian cancers, ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy occurring in a body location other than the uterus).
- ◆ There has been no demonstrated interaction between Depo Provera and other drugs such as antibiotics.
- ◆ For some users, Depo Provera is more convenient to use because women do not have to remember to take a pill every day nor do they have to insert a contraceptive device before intercourse.

Disadvantages of Depo Provera

- ◆ Unwanted menstrual cycle changes can be a result of use. Some women prefer to have their menstrual period every month and Depo Provera may cause amenorrhea (an absence of the menstrual period). Other women experience unpredictable light bleeding, and some women experience an increase in the number of days of heavy bleeding, although this effect is not as common.
- ◆ Depo Provera offers **NO** protection against sexually transmitted diseases.

- ◆ Weight gain, breast tenderness, and depression may all be side effects experienced by women. These side effects continue until the medication is cleared from a woman's body (which may take up to 6 months). Contact the Student Health Service during operating hours if you have concerns.
- ◆ Bone density may decrease placing women at an increased risk of osteoporosis. More research is needed to better understand the potential risks.
- ◆ Some women find it inconvenient to schedule and return to a health care organization every three months for a shot.
- ◆ A return to fertility may be delayed up to 18 months.

How do you obtain Depo Provera at the Student Health Service?

1. Any woman whose prescription for contraceptive method is written by a Student Health Service provider Service must first attend a **Health Issues** class. The class lasts approximately fifty minutes. Classes meet on Mondays at 2 p.m.; Wednesdays at 10 a.m.; and Thursdays at 3 p.m. during the regular school year. The class meets Wednesdays at 2 p.m. during summer school. If you cannot attend the class

due to a conflict in your schedule, you can call a health educator at 328-6794 to schedule an individual session for the class.

2. After attending the class, you can make an appointment by calling 328-6841. Schedule the exam for a day you will not be having your menstrual period. The exam cannot be performed if you are menstruating. Before coming for your appointment, know the first day of your last menstrual period and write down any questions you may have.
3. On the day of your appointment, please register at the front desk and you will be directed to the appropriate reception area.
4. You will be called by a nurse for your initial workup, which includes reviewing the consent form, checking your blood pressure, weight, and health history. Be prepared to provide a urine sample at this time.
5. The appointment with the health care provider includes a breast exam, Pap smear, pelvic exam, and screening for gonorrhea and chlamydia.
6. Students interested in Depo Provera will be counseled regarding the medication's side effects and will receive their prescription.
7. If you are receiving Depo Provera for the first time and have not taken oral contraceptives previously, you will need to schedule an appointment with a provider 10 to 12 weeks after your first injection. After this appointment the

provider will issue a prescription for the remaining three refills.

8. Upon receiving the prescription, you may purchase Depo Provera at the Student Health Service pharmacy or an outside pharmacy.
9. After receiving your prescription, you may then schedule an appointment with the rapid care nurse for the injection. The first injection will be given in the first five days after the onset of menses. A negative pregnancy test must be obtained prior to the initial injection. There will be a nominal charge for the pregnancy test.
10. After you receive your initial injection the rapid care nurse will schedule a return visit in 12 weeks. At this time you will receive a calendar indicating the dates of your next injections.
11. If you go more than 14 weeks without an injection, the nurse will recommend a pregnancy test.
12. After one year, you must receive your annual exam (pelvic, Pap smear).

Source:

Hatcher, et al. (1994). Contraceptive Technology. 16th edition.

To Contact Us

General Information(252) 328-6841
Appointments.....(252) 328-6841
Immunizations.....(252) 328-6841
Health Education(252) 328-6794
Pharmacy(252) 328-6793
Fax (252) 328-4007 or 4397

gotquestions@mail.ecu.edu

Hours of Operation

Fall and Spring

(Effective mid August 2001)

8:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m., Monday - Thursday

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Friday

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m., Saturday & Sunday, Urgent Care

Fall and Spring Pharmacy Hours

8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Monday - Thursday

8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Friday

Summer

(Mid May - Mid August)

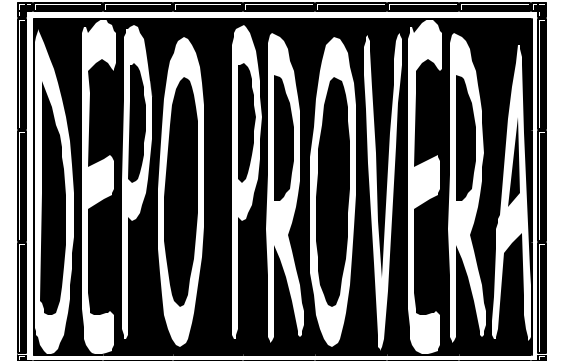
7:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday - Thursday

7:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m., Friday


After hours emergencies dial 911

**Student Health Service
East Carolina University
Greenville, NC 27858**

Division of Student Life



DEPO PROVERA



**A
CONTRACEPTIVE
CHOICE**

