

What Is It?

An injection of depot medroxyprogesterone acetate (DMPA) protects against pregnancy for 3 months (13 weeks). You need only four injections each year.

How Does It Work?

The injection prevents pregnancy by stopping the ovaries from releasing an egg each month. It also thickens cervical mucus, which makes it harder for sperm to reach the egg, and thins the lining of the uterus.

How Do I Use It?

A health care professional gives you the injection every 3 months (13 weeks). You can get the injection early if necessary. You can get an injection up to 2 weeks late with no loss of effectiveness.

Benefits

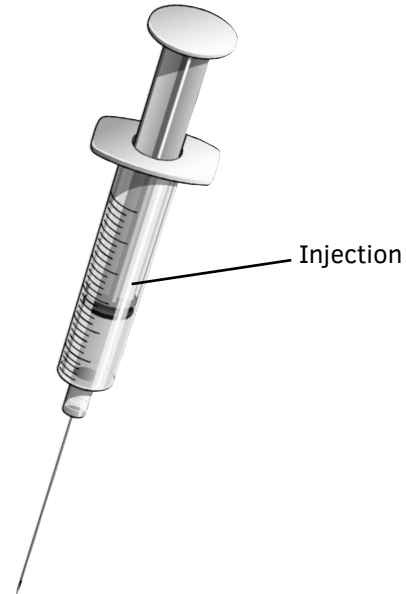
- You do not need to remember it every day.
- It does not interfere with sex.
- If used long-term, it can reduce the risk of cancer of the uterus.
- It may protect against pelvic inflammatory disease.
- It reduces pelvic pain caused by endometriosis.

Risks

- Bone loss may occur with use of the injection. When the injections are stopped, some, if not all, of the bone that was lost is gained back. Any bone loss that occurs is not likely to increase the risk of fracture. It is OK to use the shot beyond 2 years.
- The injection may increase the risk of cardiovascular disease in women who have multiple risk factors for cardiovascular disease, a history of stroke, vascular disease, or poorly controlled high blood pressure. It should not be used by women with certain liver diseases, some forms of lupus, or current breast cancer.

Possible Side Effects

- Irregular bleeding, which usually decreases with each injection
- Headaches
- Weight gain (less than 5 pounds on average)
- A temporary delay in fertility (10 months on average) after stopping the injection



Effectiveness of injection compared to other methods	Highly effective
	Less effective
Protects against STIs, including HIV?	No
Effective right away?	Yes, if you start using it within 7 days of the start of your menstrual period. If you start this method at any other time, avoid sexual intercourse or use a back-up method, such as a condom, for the next 7 days.
OK with breastfeeding?	Yes

* Abbreviations: HIV, human immunodeficiency virus; STIs, sexually transmitted infections.