



Facts About CONTRACEPTIVE SHOTS

What are contraceptive shots?

Contraceptive shots are a birth control method that is injected every 11-13 weeks by a health care provider.

How do contraceptive shots work?

Like birth control pills, contraceptive shots work by releasing a female hormone in your body. This hormone prevents pregnancy in several different ways:

- ▲ Mainly, it keeps the body from releasing an egg that could be fertilized by a man's sperm;
- ▲ It causes changes to the cervical mucus making it more difficult for sperm to enter the uterus; or
- ▲ Less likely, it may keep a fertilized egg from attaching to the uterus.



How well do contraceptive shots work?

Very well. Contraceptive shots prevent pregnancy about 94 to 99 percent of the time. This means that it works about as well as having your tubes tied, but it only lasts 11-13 weeks. If you do not get a new shot every 11-13 weeks, you can get pregnant.

Why are contraceptive shots a good choice for me?

Contraceptive shots are safe and work very well. You do not have to remember or do anything when you have sex to prevent pregnancy; however, this does not prevent HIV and sexually transmitted

diseases. If you decide later that you want to have a baby, all you have to do is stop getting the shots.

Can I breastfeed my baby if I take contraceptive shots?

Yes. Talk to your health care provider about this.

When you get a contraceptive shot:

Tell your health care provider if you take any medicines or start a new medicine.

You may be told by your health care provider to use a backup method of birth control, such as condoms, for a week after you get your first shot. As long as you get another shot every 11-13 weeks (about every 3 months), you don't need to use anything else when you have sex. However, you may want your partner to use a condom to protect you from HIV or other diseases you can get when you have sex.

REMEMBER

Contraceptive shots do not protect you from getting HIV or other diseases you can get when you have sex. To protect yourself, use a latex or polyurethane condom each time you have sex.

CONTINUED ON BACK

You should not take contraceptive shots if:

- ▲ You are pregnant or think you might be
- ▲ You have breast cancer

You may use the contraceptive shot (with caution) if:

- ▲ You have confirmed migraines with aura
- ▲ Past history of breast cancer and no disease for 5 years
- ▲ You have Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE)
- ▲ You have had a stroke, severe liver disease or heart disease
- ▲ You have Diabetes Mellitus with complications
- ▲ Multiple risk factors (older age, smoking, diabetes and high blood pressure)
- ▲ You have severe high blood pressure or rheumatoid arthritis
- ▲ You have bleeding from your vagina and do not know why

Will I have any problems if I take contraceptive shots?

Contraceptive shots can lower the density of your bones. When the shot is stopped, the calcium in bones begins to come back and the density of the bones recovers. There is no evidence of greater risk for broken bones later in life in those taking the shot than in those who did not take the shot. However, every woman should take steps to have healthy bones. To do this, take in plenty of calcium, get adequate Vitamin D, get plenty of exercise and don't smoke.

What are the possible side effects of contraceptive shots?

The most common side effect for women using contraceptive shots is irregular bleeding. It is more common in the first 6 to 12 months of use. You may bleed more or less when you have your period than you did before taking the shot, or you may not have a period at all. Other side effects you may have include headaches, nervous feelings, sore breasts, change in appetite, weight gain, decreased sex drive, depression (feelings of sadness). Most of the time, any changes you have will not last long. After using contraceptive shots, even for a year, there may be a delay in getting pregnant. On average it may take 10 months to get pregnant after your last shot. This is normal with contraceptive shots, so keep that in mind when deciding what birth control you want to use.

Are there any warning signs I need to watch for?

- ▲ Repeated, very painful headaches;
- ▲ Depression, feelings of sadness;
- ▲ Heavy bleeding;
- ▲ Severe pain in lower abdominal area;
- ▲ Pain, pus or bleeding that has not gone away, at the place where you got your shot.

If you have any questions, concerns or need an appointment, call:

I will need a new shot on:

(date)

Reference: Contraceptive Technology 20th ed.



State of North Carolina • Department of Health and Human Services • Division of Public Health
www.ncdhhs.gov

N.C. DHHS is an equal opportunity employer and provider.

25,000 copies of this public document were printed using Title X funds at a cost of \$597.52 or \$0.0239008 per copy. Rev. 3/13 ♻️