

MEDROXYPROGESTERONE Injection

Other Name: Depo-Provera®



Important note: The following information is intended to add to, not replace, the knowledge and judgment of your doctor, pharmacist or other health care professional.

Please read this leaflet carefully before you decide about using this method of contraception.

Why are you using this medicine?

Medroxyprogesterone injection is used to prevent pregnancy. It works by stopping a woman's egg cells from ripening and being released. It also changes the lining of the womb to make it less likely that a fertilized egg will attach. The mucus that surrounds the woman's cervix (neck of the womb) also becomes thicker so that the sperm cannot get through as easily to fertilise an egg.

Medroxyprogesterone is a progestogen (female hormone) used for contraception. It can be used for:

- long-term contraception to prevent pregnancy (provides contraception for 3 months)
- contraception in spacing a family, or
- extra protection when taking other medicines (e.g. rifampicin)

When to use this medicine

Medroxyprogesterone works as a contraceptive and is usually given every 12 weeks as a single intramuscular injection of 1 mL (150 mg) into the buttock or upper arm. The injection is given during the first 5 days after the beginning of a normal menstrual period.

If used following childbirth the first medroxyprogesterone injection can be given within 5 days after childbirth if you are not breast-feeding or at least 6 weeks after childbirth if you are breast-feeding.

Provided that the injection is given at the times stated above, then you are protected from pregnancy straight away and there is no need to take extra precautions. However, once administered it cannot be reversed.

For continual effective contraceptive cover, medroxyprogesterone MUST be given every 12 weeks. Make sure your next appointment is in 12 weeks time.

Because medroxyprogesterone injection is an effective contraceptive, the risk of accidental pregnancy for women who have their injections regularly (every 12 weeks) is very low. If you think you may have become pregnant while using this contraceptive, see your doctor.

This injection does not protect against HIV (AIDS) and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs).

Side effects

Unfortunately as well as having good effects, most medicines have some effects on your body that are unwanted. These are called *side effects*.

Call your doctor **immediately** if you have any of these side effects:

- red, swollen, or sore skin under the injection site
- vision loss, double vision (diplopia), bulging of the eye
- depression
- migraine
- severe abdominal or leg cramps
- unusual vaginal discharge or inflammation
- skin rash (severe itching or hives)
- pain or swelling of the calf muscle
- jaundice or yellowing of the eyes and/or skin

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you have these side effects:

- changes in weight, changes in appetite
- hair thinning or hair loss
- headache
- acne
- feeling bloated
- nausea
- dizziness or tiredness
- breast tenderness, hot flushes
- difficulty sleeping or drowsiness
- irregular periods (very light or no periods)

Medroxyprogesterone usually disrupts the pattern of a woman's period. After the first injection, irregular, possibly lengthy bleeding or spotting will occur. This continues in some women. After four injections, most women find that their periods have stopped completely. This is quite normal.

The list of side effects is **not** complete. Tell your doctor or pharmacist if any of these side effects are of a concern to you.

Other medicines

Tell your doctor or pharmacist if you are taking any other medicines including herbal or complementary products and medicines you can buy without a prescription.

Using medroxyprogesterone injections

Your usual level of fertility will return when the effect of the injection has worn off. This time can vary between women, and does not depend on how long you have been using medroxyprogesterone. In most women the effect will have worn off 5 to 6 months after the last injection.

Read this leaflet and discuss any questions you have about your medicines with your doctor or pharmacist.