

All about the Birth Control Shot

The Birth Control Shot has hormones in it to keep you from getting pregnant for 12 weeks.

The shot has a hormone that keeps the woman's eggs from leaving her ovaries. It also thickens the mucus at the opening of the uterus, so the man's sperm cannot get inside.

How does the Birth Control Shot work?

You must go to a health care provider to get a shot. This shot keeps the hormones in your body at the level needed to keep you from getting pregnant.

If the first shot is given by the fifth day of your period, it starts to work right away. It keeps working for 12 weeks. The shot wears off after that time.

You must go back to your provider every 12 weeks for a new shot.

How well does the Shot work?

The shot works very well to prevent pregnancy.

Only about 1 to 3 women out of 100 who use the shot for a year get pregnant.

How is the Shot given?

A health care provider gives you the shot in the hip or arm. You may have some soreness where the shot was given.

Your Family PACT provider can help you decide if the shot is right for you.

What do some women like about using it?

- ◆ It lasts for 12 weeks at a time.
- ◆ You can use this method without others knowing it.
- ◆ Your periods may be less painful.

What do some women dislike about it?

- ◆ It causes changes in your periods.
- ◆ You may have other side effects that will not go away until the shot wears off.
- ◆ You have to go back every 12 weeks to get another shot.

What about side effects?

All women who use the shot have a change in their menstrual bleeding.

- ◆ You may not know when you will have your period.
- ◆ You may have spotting between periods.
- ◆ Your periods may be longer or shorter.

Most women stop having periods after using the shot for 12 months. This is not harmful to you.

There may be other side effects.

- ◆ You may feel tired and have sore breasts and nausea. This usually goes away after two months.
- ◆ It may make you want to eat more. Women may gain a few pounds each year. A balanced diet and exercise can help.
- ◆ Some women may have headaches, or feel nervous, depressed, or dizzy. Others may have a higher or lower sex drive.

Some side effects may not go away until the shot wears off, which may take 3 or 4 months after your last shot.

If you have any problems, talk to your Family PACT provider. There may be something that can be done to help. You may have to wait until the shot wears off to feel better. You may need to choose another kind of birth control.

Are there any other problems with using the shot?

If you want to get pregnant after you quit using the shot, it may take 4 to 18 months for you to become pregnant.

Women who use the shot for a long time may lose calcium in their bones. In most women, bone strength returns to normal after stopping the method. It is important to:

- ◆ Eat foods high in calcium, such as milk and greens.
- ◆ Get plenty of exercise.

Women who breastfeed can have the shot starting 6 weeks after childbirth. No harmful effects have been seen in breastfed children.

It may not be safe for some women.

Talk to your Family PACT provider about any health problems you have. For example:

- ◆ If you have vaginal bleeding for no known reason.
- ◆ If you have had liver problems.
- ◆ If you have breast cancer.
- ◆ If you have bone disease or have had a broken bone as an adult.

Other health problems to talk about include: migraine headaches, depression, liver disease, heart disease, stroke, high blood pressure, or diabetes.

Watch for these warning signs:

Call your Family PACT provider right away if you have:

- ◆ Sudden headaches, or repeated and painful headaches
- ◆ Heavy bleeding
- ◆ Depression
- ◆ Bad pain in your abdomen

**The Birth Control Shot will
not protect you from HIV
(the virus that causes AIDS)
or other diseases people get from
having sex.**

Use condoms (for men or women)
when you have sex
to help protect yourself from these diseases.