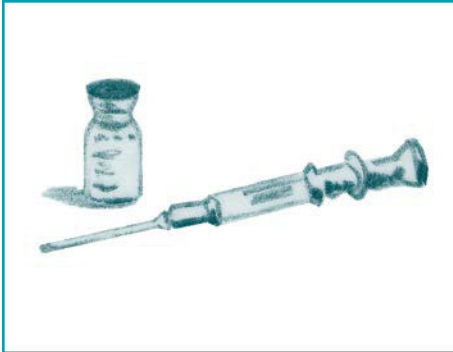


# All about the Birth Control Shot

The Birth Control Shot has a hormone in it to keep you from getting pregnant.

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. That way the man's sperm cannot get inside.



You need a shot every 12 weeks.

## How does the Birth Control Shot work?

You must go to a health care provider to get the shot. This shot keeps the hormone 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. If you get the first shot after the fifth day of your period, use condoms as a backup method of birth control for the first week.

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

## 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.

## How well does the Shot work?

The shot works very well to prevent pregnancy.

Only about 6 women out of 100 who use the shot for a year get pregnant.

## What do women like about using the Shot?

- ◆ It lasts for 12 weeks at a time.
- ◆ You can use this method without others knowing it.
- ◆ Your periods may be less painful.
- ◆ You may not get your period at all.



A health care provider gives you the shot in the hip or arm.

## What do some women dislike about it?

- ◆ It causes changes in your periods.
- ◆ You may have other side effects that will last at least 12 weeks — until the hormone wears off.
- ◆ You have to go back every 12 weeks to get another shot.
- ◆ Some women may gain weight with the shot.

## What about side effects of the Shot?

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

- ◆ Your periods may not be at the same time each month.
- ◆ You may have spotting between periods.
- ◆ Your periods may happen less often but last longer.

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

There are other side effects with the shot:

- ◆ You may feel tired and have sore breasts and nausea. Most of the time, this goes away after two months.
- ◆ Some women may gain weight after they start to use the shot. This may be more likely in women who are already overweight. Six months after you start using the shot, your provider may weigh you to see if there has been a change.
- ◆ 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. This could take 3 or 4 months or longer 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 bleeding problems. For other side effects, you will have to wait until the shot wears off to feel better. You may need to choose another kind of birth control.

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

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

## What if I am late for my next Shot?

If you are 3 or more weeks late for your next shot, you must use a back-up method (like condoms) until you get your next shot, and for 7 days after you get the next shot.

If you are late for your shot and have had sex with no method, use Emergency Contraceptive (EC) pills to prevent pregnancy.

## Are there any other problems?

If you want to get pregnant after you quit using the shot, it may take 4 to 12 months to get pregnant.

Women who use the shot for a long time may lose strength in their bones. In most women, bone strength returns to normal after they stop the method. To keep your bone strength, it is important to:

- ◆ Get plenty of exercise.
- ◆ Eat foods high in calcium, such as milk and greens.
- ◆ Take calcium pills or use antacids with calcium.

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

## It may not be safe for all women.

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

- ◆ Breast cancer
- ◆ Heart disease
- ◆ Vaginal bleeding for no reason
- ◆ Had liver problems

Also tell your provider if you have migraine headaches, depression, bone disease, or diabetes.

## Watch for these warning signs.

Call your provider right away if you have:

- ◆ Sudden headaches, or repeated and painful headaches
- ◆ Heavy vaginal bleeding
- ◆ Depression
- ◆ Severe lower abdominal pain
- ◆ Redness, pain, itching, or bleeding where you got your shot