

How to use the contraceptive injection

Information for patients

What is the contraceptive injection?

The contraceptive injection contains a progestogen hormone. There is a brand that needs a doctor or nurse to provide (Depo-Provera) by an injection into your muscle or one that you can give yourself (Sayana-Press) by an injection beneath your skin.

It works by stopping you from ovulating (releasing eggs). Injections are taken every 13 weeks and can be started immediately after your procedure. If you start it on the day of mifepristone (first tablet) there is potential for a small decrease in the effectiveness of medical abortion (4 in 100 risk of continuing pregnancy compared to 1-2 in 100 risk). It is important therefore that if you do not have as much bleeding as expected after medical abortion that you contact the clinic.

What are the advantages of the contraceptive injection?

- You do not have to remember to take a pill every day.
- You only have to think about contraception every 2-3 months.
- It may help some of the problems of periods, such as pre-menstrual tension, heavy periods, and pain.

What are the disadvantages of the contraceptive injection?

- The injection cannot be removed once given, so its effects last for 13 weeks. If side effects do occur there is little that can be done about them.
- It can sometimes take 6 -12 months after the last injection before fertility returns. This delay is not related to the length of time you use this method of contraception. You are still at risk of pregnancy as soon as the injection has 'run out' even if your period has not returned.
- In the first few months, some spotting and irregular bleeding is likely, but this gets less with time and most women stop their periods altogether after one year of use.
- There is a risk of injection site reactions and skin dimpling which occurs in around 1 in 10 people with Sayana-Press.

Are there any side effects with the contraceptive injection?

- The main side effect is an increase in appetite, which can be linked to weight gain.
- An altered bleeding pattern is common in users of both Depo-Provera and Sayana Press. After one year of use around 6 in 10 users have no periods.
- After stopping either Depo-Provera or Sayana Press it may take up to one year or sometimes longer for periods to return to normal.
- Use of the injection is associated with a small amount of bone density loss (around 5%) which is reversible on stopping.

How is the contraceptive injection given?

- The Depo-Provera injection is given into a muscle, usually in the buttock or arm.
- The Sayana Press injection is given just beneath the skin of the thigh or abdomen.
- You will lose protection against pregnancy if you are late in having the next injection. If you have unprotected sex, you may need to use emergency contraception.

Safer sex

The injection does not protect you from sexually transmitted infection. Use condoms with new partners and test regularly.

If you have any problems, do not hesitate to contact us.

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