



How do I start the contraceptive injection?

To start the contraceptive injection, you will need to see a doctor. They will be able to assess if it is suitable for you. This will also allow you to discuss this contraceptive method and to ask any questions you might have.

The doctor will figure out the right time for you to have the first injection. If you are using another hormonal contraceptive, you may be able to start straight away.

If you are not currently using a hormonal method of contraception, the first injection will need to be given within 5 days of the start of your period. This ensures that there is no risk of pregnancy at the time.

You will be given a prescription to get the DMPA at a pharmacy then return for the injection. In some clinics, such as SHFPACT, DMPA is kept in stock on the premises, so it can be given to you at the time without the need to go to a pharmacy.

Visiting the SHFPACT clinic

SHFPACT's sexual and reproductive health clinic offers a holistic, confidential, and respectful service to Canberra and the region.

The majority of SHFPACT doctors and nurses are female. All our doctors and nurses have specialist sexual and reproductive health qualifications and approach all matters sensitively.



SHFPACT Clinical Services

- Contraceptive Advice, Information & Services
- IUD's and other Long Acting Contraceptive Options
- Cervical Screening
- Canberra Menopause Centre
- Pregnancy Options Counselling
- Sexually Transmissible Infections (STIs):
- Testing, Treatment and Advice
- Blood borne virus and HIV testing
- Emergency Contraception (the 'Morning After' Pill)
- Breast Checks and Breast Awareness Education
- Fertility Issues and Pre-conception Advice
- Sexual Difficulties and Sexuality Education
- PrEP Information, Advice, and Prescription

References/acknowledgements:

Contraception: An Australian clinical practice handbook 4th Edition
 Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists UK. <https://www.fsrh.org/home/>
 Family Planning Australia: <https://www.fpnsw.org.au/factsheets/individuals/contraception/contraceptive-injection>
 Health Direct <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/contraceptive-injection>
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The Contraceptive Injection



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What is the contraceptive injection?

The contraceptive injection is a hormone injection that prevents pregnancy.

The hormone is called Depot Medroxyprogesterone Acetate (DMPA). DMPA is a progestogen that is like the hormone progesterone made by your body.

DMPA has been available as a contraceptive method for many years.

How is it given, and how often?

The contraceptive injection is given by a doctor or nurse every 12 weeks in your upper arm or buttock.

How does it work?

The contraceptive injection prevents ovulation (an egg being released from your ovary).

It also thickens the mucus in your cervix making it difficult for sperm to enter the uterus (womb).

The DMPA is released slowly into your body over time. Each injection protects you from becoming pregnant for 12 weeks.



How effective is the contraceptive injection?

The contraceptive injection is 99.8% effective with perfect use, and 96% effective with typical use.

It is more effective if you have the repeat injection right on time every 12 weeks.

What are the possible side effects?

The most common side effect of the contraceptive injection is a change in your menstrual bleeding.

Many people find their bleeding stops altogether over time. This has no harmful effects, and most people using the contraceptive injection find this a positive side effect.

Some people will continue to experience light irregular bleeding, and a small number may experience heavy or longer bleeding.

Other possible side effects:

Some people may experience a small amount of weight gain, headaches, breast tenderness, or mild acne.

Other people report a change in mood or sexual interest. However, there is no evidence that these are caused by the contraceptive injection.

What are the advantages of the contraceptive injection?

- It is a highly effective contraceptive
- It is relatively inexpensive
- It only needs to be given every 12 weeks
- There is often lighter or no vaginal bleeding
- It can reduce period pain, heavy periods, and premenstrual symptoms (PMS)
- It can reduce anaemia caused by heavy periods
- It is suitable if you cannot use oestrogen
- It can't be detected by other people



What are the disadvantages of the contraceptive injection?

- There can be a delay to the return of normal fertility in people who use the contraceptive injection. On average, this delay is around 8 months following the last injection but can be up to 2 years. For this reason, the contraceptive injection is not recommended if you are thinking of becoming pregnant in the near future. It does not affect fertility in the long term
- There is evidence that there is a slight reduction in the density of bones while people are using the contraceptive injection. This effect is reversed when you stop using it.
- Once you have had the injection, it cannot be reversed, and the effects will be present for at least 12 weeks.
- You will need to see a healthcare provider every 12 weeks for the injection.

Who can use the contraceptive injection?

Most people can use the contraceptive injection. It is considered safe to use while breastfeeding.

When is the contraceptive injection not suitable?

The contraceptive Injection may not be suitable for you if you:

- Have a history of breast cancer
- Have a history of stroke or heart disease or risk factors for these conditions
- Have unexplained vaginal bleeding
- Have a history of severe liver disease or liver tumours
- Are considering pregnancy soon