

DMPA: The Injectable Contraceptive

What Is It?

DMPA is an injection containing the hormone progestin. The injection is given every three months.

How Effective Is It?

DMPA is highly effective, if the injections are given every three months. If 100 young women use DMPA regularly for one year, typically only one of them would become pregnant.

How Does DMPA work?

DMPA works by preventing the release of the egg from the ovary. Without an egg to be fertilized, a woman cannot become pregnant.

Advantages

- * Is safe and effective.
- * Lasts for three months.
- * Periods become very light and often disappear after a year of use.
- * Completely reversible, can become pregnant again after stopping DMPA, although there might be a delay of several months.
- * Can be used while breastfeeding.
- * Does not interfere with sex.
- * May improve anemia.

Disadvantages

- * Menstrual pattern will probably change.
- * Increased appetite may cause weight gain.
- * Typically a four-month delay in getting pregnant after stopping DMPA.
- * Does not protect against STIs/HIV.
- * **May be difficult for adolescents to remember to return for next injection.**

Possible Side Effects

Most adolescents experience no side effects. Occasionally, an adolescent may experience:

- * Irregular spotting
- * Prolonged light to moderate bleeding
- * Bleeding that becomes lighter, less frequent, or stops altogether
- * Weight gain or headaches

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CLIENT INSTRUCTIONS

Show the client the vial of DMPA and explain the following:

How to Use DMPA

- * DMPA is given by injection every three months.
- * **Identify a way to remember to return in three months (e.g. write it down on a calendar).**
- * Never be more than two weeks late for a repeat injection.
- * If given between day one and day seven of the menstrual cycle, DMPA is effective immediately.

Missed Injection – What to do

- * If the injection is given after day seven of the cycle, a backup method should be used for 24 hours.
- * If unable to come at the appointed time, it is possible to come up to four weeks early for the second injection, or up to two weeks late.

Possible Side Effects

- * Most adolescent women experience no side effects.
- * Occasionally, adolescents may experience side effects (explain possible side effects, see front of card).

DMPA Does Not Protect Against STIs/HIV

To protect against STIs/HIV and provide further protection against pregnancy, use a condom during every act of intercourse.

Reasons to Return to Provider

- * Heavy vaginal bleeding
- * Excessive weight gain
- * Headaches
- * Anytime there is a problem.
- * Another three-month injection or a resupply of condoms is needed (never run out completely before returning).
- * Either partner thinks s/he may have been exposed to a STI.

Have the Client Repeat this Information Back to You.