

# Contraceptive Injection

Commonly known as 'Depo'

## What is Depo?

Depo is the popular name for hormonal contraceptive injection medroxyprogesterone acetate.

Depo contains a progestogen which is similar to the hormone progesterone, which is naturally produced by the female body.

Depo is injected into a muscle every 12 weeks & is slowly absorbed into the blood stream to prevent pregnancy. **It is 96% - 99.5% effective.**

There are 2 brands of Depo available in Australia: Depo-Provera & Depo-Ralovera.



## How does Depo work?

Depo works by:

- Preventing ovulation (egg release from the ovaries).
- Thickening the mucus of the cervix so that the sperm can not enter the uterus (womb).
- It may take up to 7 days to start working. If you are late having the injection, the effectiveness of Depo in preventing pregnancy is reduced.



## Where can I get Depo?

Starting Depo for the first time requires an assessment by a doctor and getting a prescription.

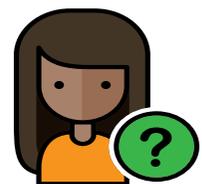
Assessments & prescriptions can be obtained from Family Planning Tasmania (FPT) clinics or your doctor.

Once you get the Depo from the pharmacy, you need to make another appointment with a doctor to have the injection.

## Is Depo right for me?

**You may not be able to have a Depo injection if you have:**

- Liver disease.
- Cardiovascular disease.
- Diabetes.
- Depression.
- Difficulty with intra muscular injections.
- Plans to become pregnant within 6-12 months.
- Difficulty in tolerating changes in your periods.



**Depo is NOT SUITABLE for women who have:**

- An allergy to Depo.
- Breast cancer & some other forms of cancer.
- Low bone density.

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Family Planning Tasmania  
sexuality education & clinical services

## Advantages



- 96 - 99.5% effective.
- Cheap, long acting & last up to 12 weeks.
- Most women will have no periods or very light bleeding during their periods.
- Period pain & discomfort may be reduced.
- Can be used while breast feeding.
- An alternative for those women who cannot have the hormone Oestrogen.

## Disadvantages



- If you are late getting your injection it may not work.
- It is impossible to reverse the effects of an injection once it is given.
- If side effects occur, they may last up to 3 months.
- There could be a delay in return to fertility. On average, the delay is about 9 months from the last Depo injection being given.

## Potential side effects

- Periods can stop completely in some women (approx 50% - 60%).
- Irregular or spot bleeding.
- Prolonged bleeding (usually improves with time).
- Heavy bleeding.

- Headaches.
- Skin Changes.
- Bloating.
- Tender breasts.
- Mood changes.
- About 20% users will gain some weight.



*There are medications that may help with prolonged/heavy bleeding. Contact your doctor.*

## What else do I need to know?

- At your assessment the doctor will assess your suitability for Depo.
- A pregnancy test is usually carried out during the initial assessment.
- The first injection is usually given during the first five days of your menstrual period. This is to ensure that you are not pregnant.
- In some cases, it is necessary to use condoms for seven days post injection.
- Your doctor will review your risks for loss of bone density whilst you are using Depo.
- Follow-up injections are given every 12 weeks to continue protection against pregnancy. To renew your prescription you will need to be reviewed by a doctor every 6 months.
- Depo does not protect you against Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) or Blood Borne Viruses (BBVs).

