

What are Contraceptive Injections?

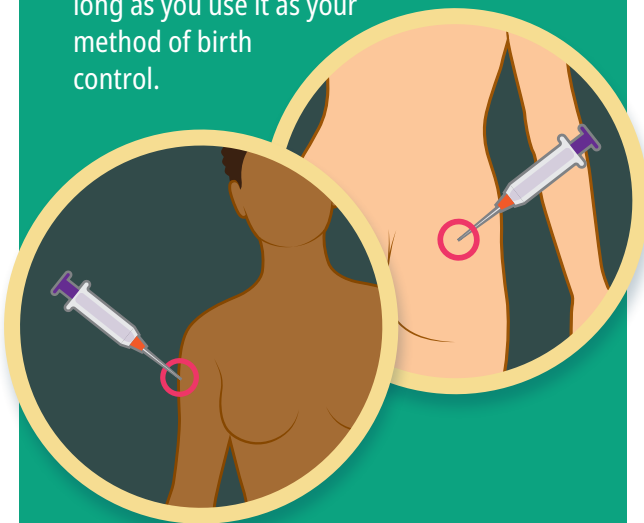
The shot is a birth control method that contains the hormone **progesterone**.

How does it work?

Contraceptive injection works in several ways. It can prevent the egg's release from the woman's ovaries. It can make cervical mucus thicker, and it can change the lining of the uterus so the egg cannot attach.

Contraceptive injections are given as a shot. If you receive the first shot during the first 5 days of your period, you are protected from a pregnancy right away. If you get the shot at any other time, your health care provider will talk to you about using a back-up birth control method.

The shot is given in either the **upper arm** or **buttocks** every **13–15 weeks**, for as long as you use it as your method of birth control.



Shot warning signs

Serious health problems with shot use are rare. The following are warning signs of problems.

Remember “RHDSP”

R **Repeated, painful headaches** or headaches that start after initiating contraceptive injection

H **Heavy bleeding**

D **Depression/Decreased bone mineral density**

S **Severe lower abdominal pain**

P **us; pain or bleeding** at the injection site

If you experience any of these warning signs, call your health care provider as soon as possible.

If you have any questions, you can call:

1-855-472-3432

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USING CONTRACEPTIVE INJECTIONS

The Shot



**SOUTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH**

How well does it work?

The contraceptive injection is 99% effective in preventing pregnancy. It is not a permanent method of birth control. Contraceptive injections don't protect against sexually transmitted infections, you still need to use a condom.

Is it safe?

A contraceptive injection is safe for most women, but there are women who cannot use it. You might not be able to use a contraceptive injection if you:

- have had a brain or spinal cord tumor
- have an allergy to any ingredients in the contraceptive injection
- have unexplained vaginal bleeding
- have had blood clots
- have had breast cancer
- have had liver disease
- have had a heart attack or coronary artery disease
- have had a stroke

Women who use contraceptive injections should not smoke. The effects of nicotine on women using contraceptive injections are not fully known.

What are the side effects?

Most women who use contraceptive injections have a change in their monthly period. Some women might have a longer period, irregular bleeding or spotting, or no period at all. Over half of the women will stop having periods after using contraceptive injections for a year.

Most women do not have problems with contraceptive injections, but some women can have:

- headaches
- nervousness
- weight gain or loss
- dizziness
- weakness
- nausea
- stomach discomfort
- tiredness
- hair loss or growth
- lower sex drive
- meningiomas

If taken during pregnancy, there is a slight chance of having a low birth weight baby. If you think you might be pregnant, talk with your health care provider before you get the shot.

Contraceptive injections can lower the amount of calcium in your bones. Long-term use of the contraceptive injection is not recommended (longer than 2 years) because it can affect your bone health and cause decreased bone strength. Some women can have long term effects.

Bone health is important to all women.

Eating foods high in calcium and getting plenty of exercise helps keep bones healthy.

Foods that have a lot of calcium are milk, yogurt, cheese, salmon, shrimp and broccoli.

Exercises that can help make your bones strong are walking, running and climbing stairs.

Your healthcare provider may want you to take a vitamin with Vitamin D and calcium in it.

Stopping Contraceptive Injections:

A woman can stop using the shots at any time.

If you stop the shots because you want to get pregnant, you might be able to get pregnant immediately. It can take some women up to two to three years after stopping contraceptive injections before they are able to get pregnant.

We cannot predict how soon you will be able to get pregnant. This is important to know as you plan the timing of your future pregnancies.