Important Information About Depo-Provera (DMPA) Injectable Contraceptive

Effective, safe, easy to use, and reversible. Depo-Provera injectable contraceptive offers almost complete protection from pregnancy and has been proved safe. When you stop your injections, you can get pregnant—usually not right away but 6 to 12 months later. Depo-Provera does not prevent sexually transmitted diseases including AIDS.

Vaginal bleeding changes. After the first several injections you will probably have more vaginal bleeding or bleeding at unexpected times. Later, you will probably have little vaginal bleeding or none at all. These changes are not harmful. They do not mean that you are pregnant or sick. They do not mean that bad blood is building up inside you. Also, you may gain weight when you use Depo-Provera. This also is not harmful.

Next injection in 3 months. Come back for an injection every 3 months. Try to come in on time. You can have the next injection up to 4 weeks early or up to 2 weeks late. But come back even if you are more than 2 weeks late.

Please come back…
- For your next injection or another family planning method.
- If you develop extremely heavy bleeding (twice as much or twice as long as normal for you) or long-lasting soreness and redness where you had an injection.
- Any time you have any questions, problems, or concerns.

Counseling About Injectable Contraceptives

INJECTABLE CONTRACEPTIVES are convenient, private, and very effective. This guide will help you, the family planning provider, tell your clients about the 3-month injectable called Depo-Provera® (DMPA) or the 2-month injectable called Noristerat® (NET EN).*

Counseling is a step-by-step discussion between you and the client. Counseling helps each client choose and use the family planning method that best suits that person's needs. Good counseling involves friendly, open talk with the client to find out politely what she wants and what concerns her.

The letters in the word GATHER stand for the steps in counseling a client about choosing a family planning method:

G: Greet clients
A: Ask clients about themselves
T: Tell clients about available methods including injectables
A: Help clients choose a method
T: Explain how to use that method
R: Return visits should be planned

**F**EET clients
**A**SK clients about themselves.
**T**HEMSELVES. Find out their family planning needs and concerns. Help clients to express themselves. Ask if certain family planning methods interest them.

*Monthly injectables—for example, Cyclofen™ and Mesigyna®—are not covered in this guide.*
TELL clients interested in injectables these facts:

- *Depo-Provera* and *Noristerat* involve an injection every few months—3 months with *Depo-Provera*, 2 months with *Noristerat*.
- Both injectables prevent pregnancy very well.
- Both change vaginal bleeding for most women—often more bleeding or irregular bleeding at first and then no bleeding at all after a year. These changes are not harmful. They are not signs of serious health problems or pregnancy.
- Most women gain weight while using injectables.
- Some women notice headaches, dizziness, breast tenderness, moodiness, nausea, or acne. Less than one-quarter of women report any of these side effects, and more than three-quarters do not.
- Women who use injectables can become pregnant when they stop having injections. Becoming pregnant may take several months longer than usual, however.
- Does a woman need protection against AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)? Then she should use condoms whether or not she chooses injectables. If her partner will not use condoms, she should use spermicides.

HELP clients choose a method that suits them.

**Reasons to choose *Depo-Provera* or *Noristerat***:

- Very effective for several months at a time.
- Easy to use.
- Private.
- Can be used while breastfeeding.
- Helps prevent anemia (low iron in blood), ectopic pregnancy (outside the womb), and cancer of the endometrium (lining of the uterus). May help prevent ovarian cancer, sickle-cell crises, and epileptic seizures.

**Note**: Women of any age, women who have had children, and women who have not had children can use *Depo-Provera* or *Noristerat*. Also, women with epilepsy, uncontrolled diabetes, tuberculosis, headaches, varicose veins, or deep venous thrombosis (blood clots in the leg) can use *Depo-Provera* or *Noristerat*.

**Reasons to choose another method**:

- Would not want vaginal bleeding changes or weight gain.
- Wants pregnancy in next 6 months.
- Has certain medical conditions:
  - Likely pregnancy
  - Unexplained vaginal bleeding suggesting pregnancy or a serious underlying condition
  - Current breast cancer
  - Past breast cancer*
  - Severe high blood pressure*
  - Heart disease due to blocked arteries*
  - Diabetes with complications involving the circulatory system*
  - Hepatitis with symptoms; severe cirrhosis; liver tumors*
  - Past stroke*

*A nurse or doctor can decide whether exceptions can be made in individual cases.

EXPLAIN how to use *Depo-Provera* or *Noristerat*.

**When to start. A woman can start *Depo-Provera* or *Noristerat***:

- Any time that you, the provider, can be reasonably sure that she is not pregnant—for example, within the first 7 days after menstrual bleeding starts, or at any other time if she has not had unprotected sex since her last normal menstrual period. A pregnancy test is needed.
- Right after childbirth if she is not breastfeeding or if she is giving the baby other food or liquid along with breast milk. If possible, waiting for 6 weeks would be better.
- Right after an abortion.
- If a woman cannot have her first injection right after an abortion.
- If a woman has certain medical conditions:
  - Likely pregnancy
  - Unexplained vaginal bleeding suggesting pregnancy or a serious underlying condition
  - Current breast cancer
  - Past breast cancer*
  - Severe high blood pressure*
  - Heart disease due to blocked arteries*
  - Diabetes with complications involving the circulatory system*
  - Hepatitis with symptoms; severe cirrhosis; liver tumors*
  - Past stroke*

**Explain the injection procedure**.

- Antiseptic is rubbed on the skin.
- The injection is given in the arm or buttock with a sterile or disinfected needle and syringe.
- The client should not rub the injection site. This could shorten effectiveness.

RETURN for follow-up should be planned.

Tell the client when and where to come for the next injections:

- For *Depo-Provera*: In 3 months and every 3 months.
- For *Noristerat*: In 2 months and every 2 months.
- Urge the client to come back on time if possible but to come back even if she is late.

If a woman is more than 2 weeks late for *Depo-Provera* or more than 1 week late for *Noristerat*, she should use condoms or spermicide or else avoid sex. When you are reasonably sure that she is not pregnant, she can have her injection. She can come back up to 4 weeks early for *Depo-Provera* and up to 2 weeks early for *Noristerat*.

Discuss these reasons to come back at any time:

- Any questions or problems.
- Injection site is sore for more than 2 days or is bleeding or leaking pus.
- Very heavy vaginal bleeding (twice as long or twice as much as usual).
- Severe, repeated headaches with trouble seeing, speaking, or moving.