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Depo-Provera FAQ

Q: What is Depo-Provera?

A: Depo-Provera is in a class of medications called "progestins", and is an injectable contraception used to prevent pregnancy.

Q: Does Depo-Provera prevent the spread of HIV or other sexually transmitted diseases (STDs)?

A: No. While Depo-Provera acts as a birth control, it does not prevent the spread of HIV or other STDs.

Q: Has there been any recent news about Depo-Provera?

A: In November 2004, the FDA announced that a black box warning would be added to the labeling of Depo-Provera Contraceptive Injection. The label warns Depo-Provera users that prolonged use may result in the loss of bone density, and that the loss may be greater the longer the drug is administered. More information: [11/17/04 FDA Alert](#).

Q: What should I know before using Depo-Provera?

A: Depo-Provera is usually administered by a health care provider in an office or clinic. You must receive your first Depo-Provera injection only at a time when there is no possibility that you are pregnant. If you have been using a different method of birth control and are switching to Depo-Provera, your health care professional will tell you when you should receive your first injection. Changes in your menstrual cycle will probably occur when using Depo-Provera. You should have a completely physical exam at least yearly, and tell laboratory personnel that you are using Depo-Provera before undergoing any laboratory tests.

Q: Are there any serious health risks associated with Depo-Provera Use?

A: If you are younger than 35 years old and began to receive Depo-Provera in the last 4-5 years, you may have a slightly increased risk that you will develop breast cancer. Depo-Provera may also increase the chance that you will develop a blood clot that moves to your lungs or brain. Talk to your healthcare professional about the risks of using Depo-Provera.

Q: What are the side effects associated with Depo-Provera?

A: Tell your healthcare professional if any of these symptoms are severe or persistent: changes in menstrual periods; weight gain; weakness; tiredness; nervousness; irritability; depression; difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep; hot flashes; breast pain, swelling, or tenderness; stomach cramps or bloating; leg cramps; back or joint pain; acne; loss of hair on scalp; swelling, redness, irritation, burning, or itching of the vagina; white vaginal discharge; changes in sexual desire; cold or flu symptoms; or pain, irritation, lumps, redness or scarring in the place where the medication was injected.

Some side effects can be serious. The following side effects of Depo-Provera use are uncommon, but if you experience any of them, call your healthcare professional immediately: sudden shortness of breath; sudden sharp or crushing chest pain; coughing up blood; severe headache; upset stomach; vomiting; dizziness or faintness; change or loss of vision; double vision; bulging eyes; difficulty speaking; weakness or numbness in an arm or leg; seizure; yellowing of the skin or eyes; extreme tiredness; pain, swelling, warmth, redness, or tenderness in one leg only; menstrual bleeding that is heavier or lasts longer than normal; severe pain or tenderness just below the waist; rash; hives; itching; difficulty breathing or swallowing; swelling of the hands, feet, ankles, or lower legs; difficult, painful, or frequent urination; or constant pain, pus, warmth, swelling, or bleeding in the place where the medication was injected.

Q: What should I tell my healthcare professional before he or she prescribes Depo-Provera?

A: Tell your healthcare professional: if you are allergic to Depo-Provera (medroxyprogesterone) or any other medications; about any prescription and nonprescription medications, vitamins, nutritional supplements, and herbal products you take or plan to take; if you or anyone in your family has or has ever had breast cancer or diabetes; if you have or have ever had problems with your breasts such as lumps, bleeding from your nipples, an abnormal mammogram (breast x-ray), or fibrocystic breast disease (swollen, tender breasts and/or breast lumps that are not cancer); unexplained vaginal bleeding; irregular or very light menstrual periods; excessive weight gain or fluid retention before your period; blood clots in your legs, lungs, brain, or eyes; stroke or mini-stroke; migraine headaches; seizures; depression; high blood pressure; heart attack; asthma; or heart, liver, or kidney disease; if you are pregnant, think you might be pregnant, or plan to become

pregnant; or if you are breast-feeding. If you are having surgery, including dental surgery, tell the healthcare professional and/or dentist that you are using Depo-Provera.

Q: Is there a special diet I should follow while taking Depo-Provera?

A: While taking Depo-Provera, you should eat plenty of foods that are rich in calcium and vitamin D in order to help decrease the loss of calcium in your bones. Your healthcare professional should recommend which foods are good sources of these nutrients, how many servings you need each day, and/or recommend the use of calcium or vitamin D supplements.

Q: What should I do if I think I have been injured as a result of using Depo-Provera?

A: If you or a loved one have experienced any dangerous symptoms or unusual medical conditions while using Depo-Provera, you should first contact your doctor or other healthcare professional. You may also wish to meet with an experienced attorney to discuss your options and to protect your right to a legal remedy for any injuries caused by Depo-Provera use.

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