FACT SHEET: THE SHOT/DEPO-PROVERA

Remember, Depo **does not protect you from Sexually Transmitted Infections or HIV**. If you are looking for protection from STIs and HIV, both the internal and external condom are great options!

HOW DOES DEPO WORK?

- Depo contains a hormone, called progestin, similar to the one your body makes. While you use Depo, it stops your ovaries from releasing eggs. Without an egg, you cannot get pregnant.
- No method of birth control works 100%. 4 in 100 people using Depo for a year get pregnant.

HOW DO I USE DEPO?

- You get a Depo shot from your clinician in the arm or in the buttocks.
- **Use a back-up birth control method for the first 7 days** after your first shot of Depo.
- Get a shot every 3 months (every 13 weeks).

WHEN IS THE NEXT SHOT CONSIDERED LATE?

- Depo works best if you get a new shot every 13 weeks.
- Depo still works if you are two weeks late for your next shot.

WHAT IF I AM LATE GETTING A SHOT AND HAD UNPROTECTED SEX?

- If your last shot was more than 15 weeks ago, consider taking emergency contraception (EC) **right away**. EC can prevent pregnancy up to 5 days after sex, and it works better the sooner you take it.
- It can take up to 2 weeks after having unprotected sex before a pregnancy test turns positive.
- You can still get the next shot. Depo won't harm an early pregnancy.
- Make sure to take a pregnancy test 2 weeks after you've had unprotected sex. Depo changes the timing of your period and can make it hard to know when you're pregnant.

WHAT IF I AM LATE GETTING A SHOT AND DID NOT HAVE UNPROTECTED SEX?

- If you haven't had unprotected sex, it's fine if you're late for your next shot. Use a back-up method (like condoms or abstinence) for 7 days

WHAT DO PEOPLE LIKE ABOUT THE DEPO SHOT?

- Depo is safe and effective birth control. It prevents pregnancy for 3 months.
- Some people who take testosterone prefer to avoid methods that contain estrogen, and Depo only contains the hormone progestin.
- The shot lowers your risk of cancer of the uterus.
- Depo is safe while breast/chestfeeding.

HOW WILL DEPO AFFECT ME?

- You won't have a regular cycle. You may have spotting between periods, you may have no period at all, or you may bleed longer than you normally do on your period. After you stop Depo, it can take up to a year for your period to return to normal.
- You may have weight gain, bloating, headaches, and/or mood changes. Talk to your clinician about treating any side effects.
- Your bones may become slightly thinner while you take Depo. This generally goes back to normal once you stop taking the shot. Talk to your clinician if you are concerned about your fracture risk.
- For many people, it can take months for fertility to return to normal after stopping Depo. If you want to get pregnant in the next year, Depo may not be the best method to choose now.

WHERE CAN I GET DEPO?

- At an appointment with your clinician.

IS DEPO SAFE?

- The shot is very safe. Severe problems are rare. If you have any of the symptoms below, call your clinician:
  - Severe headaches
  - Very heavy bleeding
- Your clinician can help you find out if these symptoms are signs of a severe problem.