



Frequently Asked Questions

_____ about _____

Depo-Provera® (Depot Medroxyprogesterone Acetate) Contraceptive Injection and Risk of Bone Loss Northern California Region

Introduction

Calcium is generally added to the bones during the teenage and young adult years.

Loss of calcium in the bones may cause them to become weak and porous (also called osteoporosis). This may increase the risk that your bones might break, especially after menopause.

How does Depo-Provera contraceptive injection affect the bones?

Studies show that women who use Depo-Provera may lose calcium stored in their bones. The calcium loss is greater the longer the medication is used. The calcium may not return completely when the medication is stopped.

It is not known if your risk of bone loss is higher if you are a teenager when you start to use Depo-Provera. It is not known if the bone loss from using Depo-Provera will increase your risk of bone fractures later in life.

Is Depo-Provera still safe to use?

Yes. Depo-Provera is a very effective method of birth control that many women like because they only need to get the injection once every 3 months.

The manufacturer recommends that you not use Depo-Provera for longer than two years unless other methods of birth control are not right for you.

Talk to your physician to find out if Depo-Provera is right for you. The risks of an unplanned pregnancy should be weighed against the risks of bone loss.

What should I do if I am using Depo-Provera now?

Review the risks and benefits of using Depo-Provera with your health care provider. It is not known if the use of Depo-Provera increases the risk of bone fractures later in life or if your risk of bone loss is higher if you are a teenager when you start to use Depo-Provera.

After 2 years of Depo-Provera use, think about switching to another form of birth control unless other forms of birth control are not right for you. The risks of an unplanned pregnancy should be weighed against the risks of bone loss. Talk to your health care provider.

Eat a balanced diet, including calcium (1,000 mg daily for younger women; 1,200 mg daily after menopause) and vitamin D (400 to 800 IU daily).

You can also help maintain strong bones by not smoking and by doing weight-bearing exercises such as walking, aerobics, dancing, and weight training for at least 30 minutes a day.

If I am using Depo-Provera now, do I need to be tested or treated for bone loss?

There is no evidence to show that testing for bone loss has any value in deciding if a woman should continue or stop using Depo-Provera. Testing for bone loss is not recommended at this time.

There is no evidence to show that medications used for the treatment of bone loss will benefit women using Depo-Provera. Treatment with bone-loss medications is not recommended at this time.

What other birth control options are available to me?

Kaiser Permanente offers various methods of birth control. Talk to your health care provider to see if any of these are right for you.

Other resources: Check your Kaiser provider's internet home page (<http://permanente.net>) for more information on birth control options.