



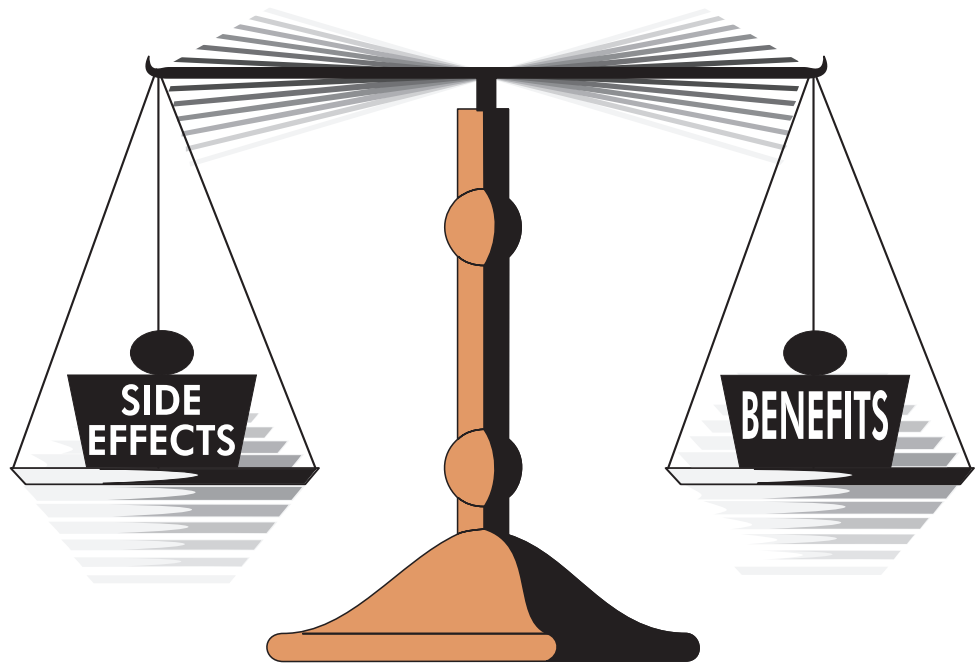
# Depo-Provera...

## A New Choice in Contraception for Australian Women

**D**epo-Provera is a long-acting hormonal contraceptive, usually given as an injection once every three months. It was approved as a contraceptive agent in Australia in 1994. It has been used for some time in many other countries and is currently used by about nine million women world-wide.

### What are its benefits?

- \* It is an effective, reversible method of contraception. It works by stopping ovulation.
- \* It is easy to use. There is no need to remember to use contraception each day, as the effect of the injection lasts three months.
- \* It is available on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS) at normal prescription rates.
- \* It can be used while breast-feeding. It can be given from six weeks after the baby is born.
- \* It may help control heavy periods in some women.
- \* It may be used in situations where oral contraceptives - 'the Pill' - cannot be absorbed properly by the body, or when other tablets interfere with their action.
- \* Its safety has been extensively researched. Studies have not shown any significant risk of increase in cancer of the ovary, cervix, liver or endometrium (lining of the womb). In fact, Depo-Provera tends to protect against this last type of cancer. Studies



## Weighing it up for you

are still unclear about the risk of breast cancer, but do not show any large increase in risk.

### What are its risks or side effects?

- \* As with other types of contraception containing only the hormone progestagen, women may experience a disturbance in the normal pattern of menstrual bleeding. A decrease in the heaviness of the period, no period at all, or irregular spotting are the most likely. Occasionally, heavy bleeding may occur.
- \* There may be a delay in return to fertility from six to 12 months after

the last injection. There does not appear to be a problem for most women with long term fertility.

- \* Symptoms similar to other contraceptives that contain progestagen may occur. These may include weight gain, headaches, breast tenderness, and bloating. Mood changes may occur in some people with possible depression and a reduction in sexual drive. It may worsen symptoms in women who are troubled by acne or excess hair growth.
- \* It is important for women wanting to use this form of contraception to understand that any side-effects they

experience may linger on for some time, as the medication is designed to continue working in the body over a three month period.

### How do I decide if it is right for me?

Depo-Provera is an effective and easy to use form of birth control now available to Australian women. For each woman however, the benefits need to be weighed against the possible risks and side-effects that may be experienced. The best person to discuss this with is your doctor, who can provide you with the information to decide what is right for you.

