Contraception - injections for men

Summary

- Contraceptive injections for men have been trialled in Australia, but there are currently no plans for the method to be made available to the public.
- Clinical studies suggest that a combination of the hormones testosterone and progesterone may provide a safe, effective and reversible method of male contraception in the future.
- When choosing a method of contraception, it is important to have access to accurate information and to talk openly about your options with your partner.

What is the contraceptive injection for men?

The contraceptive injection for men involves a combination of man-made versions of two naturally occurring male hormones – testosterone and progesterone. This combination of hormones works to stop the body from making sperm.

A number of studies have been done using this combination of hormones – usually given as injections (although implants, tablets and gels have also been studied). Most studies have shown male hormonal contraception to be effective in preventing pregnancy.

Currently, there are no plans for a hormonal method of male contraception to be made available to the public in Australia. However, in the future, male hormonal contraception may be a suitable and acceptable form of contraception for some people.

Male hormonal contraception does not give any protection from sexually transmissible infections (STIs).

Advantages of hormonal contraception for men

Some studies have shown advantages of hormonal contraception for men to include:

- It would give men a new, reversible and alternative method of contraception that they could control themselves.
- It would offer an alternative to vasectomy in men, which is not reliably reversible.
- It would provide an alternative for couples who cannot use certain methods of female contraception, such as the combined oral contraceptive pill.
- It would let men share responsibility for the cost of contraception and the need to regularly visit a doctor or reproductive health nurse.

Disadvantages of hormonal contraception for men

Some studies have shown the disadvantages of hormonal contraception for men could include:

- Side effects include acne, night sweats, weight gain and lowered sex drive. These are usually mild and can settle with time.
- It would not give protection from STIs.
- It would take about three to six months to work and about the same length of time to wear off.
- The method would not completely stop sperm from being produced in one in 25 men who use it.
- It would take many years to assess any long-term side effects.

Choosing the right method of contraception
When you are choosing the method of contraception that is right for you, it is important to have access to accurate information and to talk openly about your options with your partner.

It is also important to think about how well each method works, the possible side effects, how easy it is to use and how much it costs. It is important to weigh the pros against the cons and think about how each method meets your current and future needs.

The method you choose will depend on your general health, lifestyle and relationships. It can help to talk about your options with a doctor or reproductive health nurse.

Protection from sexually transmissible infections

The best way to lessen the risk of STIs is to use barrier protection such as condoms. Condoms can be used for oral, vaginal and anal sex with other methods of contraception to help stop infections from spreading.

Where to get help

- Pharmacist
- **Family Planning Victoria** – comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services for people of all ages Tel. 1800 013 952 or (03) 9257 0100
- **Family Planning Victoria Action Centre** – comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services for people of all ages, with an afternoon drop-in clinic for people under 25 years of age Tel. (03) 9660 4700 or 1800 013 952
- Your **GP (doctor)**

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