Lunelle Birth Control
Birth Control by Monthly Injection

Lunelle is an approved shot (*injection*) for birth control. It differs from Depo-Provera injection for birth control in several ways. Lunelle is given as an injection into the muscle of the upper arm, thigh, or buttocks every month. Depo-Provera is another injected birth control option, which has been available for many years, and is given in the muscle of the upper arm or buttock every 3 months.

Lunelle keeps you from getting pregnant by signaling the brain not to release FSH (*follicle stimulating hormone*). Without FSH, an egg will not mature each month. Lunelle may also cause your cervical mucus to thicken. This prevents the sperm from meeting an egg, if an egg is produced. Lunelle also prevents the lining of your uterus from getting ready each month to receive an egg, if an egg would become fertilized. In other words, Lunelle protects against pregnancy in 3 different ways.

LUNELLE AND DEPO-PROVERA

Some of the differences between Lunelle and Depo-Provera are:

- Lunelle is injected once a month. It is 99% effective when used as prescribed. It protects you the moment you get the first injection, if it is given within the first 5 days of your period. The next injection should be 28 to 30 days from the first one. It should be given no later than 33 days, regardless of when you get your period.
- Depo-Provera is injected only once every 3 months. Depo-Provera contains only synthetic progesterone. This may cause spotting, very irregular cycles, but usually no bleeding at all. It also thickens the mucus on the cervix and affects the lining of the uterus, like Lunelle.
- Lunelle contains both estrogen and progestin. The added estrogen in Lunelle is closer to your natural hormonal mix. Because of this, Lunelle usually helps to maintain regular menstrual periods.
- Lunelle can be given the first 5 days after a first trimester miscarriage or abortion.
- Lunelle can be given 4 weeks after the birth of a baby, if the mother is not breast-feeding.
- Women who use Lunelle return to fertility relatively quickly after stopping use, usually within 2 to 4 months.
- In some cases, when stopping Depo-Provera, it can take up to 6 months to 2 years to regain fertility.
- Lunelle causes the same side effects as oral birth control pills. **Lunelle will not protect you against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).**

BENEFITS

- Lunelle reduces the risks of:
  - Cancer of the ovary and uterus.
  - Ovarian cysts.
  - Pelvic infection.
  - Symptoms from polycystic ovary syndrome.
  - Loss of bone.
  - Noncancerous (*benign*) breast disease (*fibrocystic breast changes*).
  - Lack of red blood cells (*anemia*).
  - Pregnancy occurring outside the uterus (*tubal pregnancy*).
  - Acne, in most cases.
- Slows down the flow of heavy menstrual periods.
- Controls premenstrual syndrome, in most cases.
- Controls cramps and painful menstrual periods.
- Controls irregular menstrual periods.
- Effective in preventing pregnancy, when used correctly.
- You do not need to remember to take a pill every day, apply a patch every week, or insert a vaginal ring

every month.
- Does not interfere with sexual foreplay.
- You are always protected, when you get the injection on time.
- You do not need to insert, apply, or remove barrier methods for birth control.

DISADVANTAGES

- Does not protect against STDs.
- Requires a visit to your caregiver every month.
- Injections may be painful.
- May cost more than other methods of birth control.

RISKS AND COMPLICATIONS

- Blood clot of the leg, heart, lung, or brain.
- High blood pressure.
- Gallbladder disease.
- Liver tumors.
- Brain bleeding (*hemorrhage*).
- Risk of breast cancer.

YOU SHOULD **NOT** TAKE LUNELLE IF:

- You are pregnant.
- You are trying to get pregnant.
- You have unexplained vaginal bleeding.
- You have a history of liver disease, stroke, or heart attacks.
- You are over 35 years old, or you smoke 15 or more cigarettes per day. You should never smoke while using any hormone. It increases your risk of heart attack, stroke, and blood clots. This is true at any age.
- You have breast cancer or suspect you may have breast cancer.
- You have cancer of your female organs.
- You have a history of blood clots, cancer, or heart problems.
- You have gallbladder disease.
- You have high cholesterol or triglycerides.
- You have an abnormal mammogram (*breast X-ray*).
- You have mental depression.
- You are breast-feeding.
- You have diabetes with eye, kidney, or other blood vessel problems. Or you have diabetes for 20 years or longer.
- You have migraine headaches.
- You have heart valve disease.

SIDE EFFECTS OF LUNELLE INCLUDE:

- Within the first few months, you may have a change in your periods. It can vary from no bleeding, to irregular bleeding or spotting.
- You may lose weight, but the average change is to increase in weight. The average gain is 4 pounds in the first year, but can be up to 10 pounds.
- Headache.
- Feeling sick to your stomach (*nausea*) and vomiting.
- Change in appetite (*hunger*).
- Bloating.
- Breast tenderness.
- Nervousness.
- Dizziness.
- Lack of sexual desire.
- Mood changes.
- Depression.
- Rash.
- Loss of hair.
- Yeast or fungus vaginal infection.
- Acne, in some cases.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Mark your calendar, to get your monthly injection on time.
- Always use a condom to protect against sexually transmitted disease (STD).
- Take over-the-counter or prescription medicines for pain, discomfort, fever, or breast tenderness, as directed by your caregiver.
- Do not smoke.
- Mark your menstrual periods on a calendar, in case they become irregular.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop nausea, vomiting, or change in appetite.
- You have abnormal vaginal discharge.
- You need treatment for a migraine headache.
- You develop a rash.
- You miss your menstrual period.
- You develop abnormal bleeding.
- You are losing your hair.
- You need treatment for mood changes or depression.
- You are getting dizzy or lightheaded.
- You think you might be pregnant.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop leg pain.
- You develop chest pain.
- You are coughing up blood.
- You develop shortness of breath.
- You develop abdominal pain.
- You have an uncontrollable headache.
- You develop numbness or slurred speech.
- You develop loss of vision, double or blurry vision (*visual disturbances*).
- You develop heavy or prolonged vaginal bleeding.
- You develop yellowing of the skin and eyes (*jaundice*).
- You develop severe and uncontrolled depression.

See your caregiver if you think Lunelle injections will work for you for birth control.

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