

# *Lunelle*: Combined Injectable

## **WHAT ARE COMBINED INJECTABLES?**

Combined injectables are an injection of estrogen and progestin that you get once a month. Lunelle, manufactured by Pharmacia Inc., was approved as a monthly injectable and was made available in the United States as of June 2000. Lunelle should not be confused with the every-three-month injections of Depo-Provera. The progestin in Lunelle works by stopping ovulation so that an egg is not released, making cervical mucus thicker so that sperm cannot get through, and changing the lining of the uterus so that implantation of the fertilized egg in the uterine wall does not occur.

## **WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES?**

- Excellent cycle control after first few cycles. Compared to Depo-Provera, Lunelle offers a woman a more regular bleeding pattern, and you keep normal estrogen levels.
- A single injection gives you one month of contraception. There's nothing to worry about at the time of intercourse.
- Privacy is a major advantage. No one has to know you are using this method, although a woman does need to return to a clinic each month.
- Fertility comes back quickly. You can get pregnant within an average of three months after stopping Lunelle, compared to about 10 months after stopping Depo-Provera.
- No known increased risk of breast cancer.

## **WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES?**

- You must return to the clinic for reinjection every 28 (plus or minus five) days, unless you learn how to inject yourself, and your clinician is willing to provide you with six to 12 injections.
- You may not like repeated injections.
- Expensive in some clinics.
- Not ideal if you're breast-feeding.
- May cause breast tenderness.
- Causes some weight gain, but less weight gain than Depo-Provera.
- Causes some menstrual irregularity, but much less than with Depo-Provera.

## **WHERE CAN I GO TO GET STARTED ON LUNELLE INJECTIONS?**

You can get Lunelle injections from your clinician, health department, or family planning clinic. Most clinics provide the first shot when a woman has her period or within seven days after the start of her period.

## **WHAT IF I HAVE SEX AND I AM LATE FOR MY SHOT?**

Be sure to use condoms or another birth control method.

## **WHAT IF I HAVE SEX AND DON'T USE BIRTH CONTROL?**

Did you know that for 72 hours after sex, you can take emergency contraceptive pills to avoid becoming pregnant? AND for five to seven days after sex, you can have an IUD put in, so you won't become pregnant? Not all clinicians know about this. If you want more information or would like the phone numbers of clinicians near you that prescribe emergency birth control, call the toll-free number: (888) NOT-2-LATE or (800) 584-9911. Some of these sources of help are free. PLAN B is the emergency contraceptive pill that causes the least nausea, the least vomiting and has the lowest failure rate.

**CHOICES:** Preparation of this material was not supported by funds from a pharmaceutical company. This information is not copyrighted, and may be copied or adapted without asking permission. rah, llb: 09/20/02; (404) 616-3709 or (706) 782-6038; These brief descriptions of contraceptive options are available from the Bridging the Gap Foundation by printing them directly from this web site. Lengthier descriptions of these options may be found in *A Personal Guide to Managing Contraception for Women and Men*, which may be ordered by calling (404) 373-0530.

**FYI:** "CHOICES" is a special section of this web site. Each brief description of a contraceptive may be copied and provided to individual patients or classes.

Source: *Managing Contraception*, Tiger, GA. Web site [www.managingcontraception.com](http://www.managingcontraception.com).