

# LEARNING BURST: ANNOYING BLEEDING ON THE CONTRACEPTIVE IMPLANT... AND OTHER BLEEDING ON BIRTH CONTROL

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# Disclosure

- Jen Robinson, MS, WHNP-BC, CNM, RN is a Nexplanon trainer for Organon

# Learning objectives

**01**

Review common bleeding side effects of the contraceptive implant

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**02**

Discuss common bleeding side effects of other contraceptive methods, including oral contraceptive pills, intrauterine devices, and the contraceptive injection

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**03**

Examine management strategies for bleeding side effects of contraception

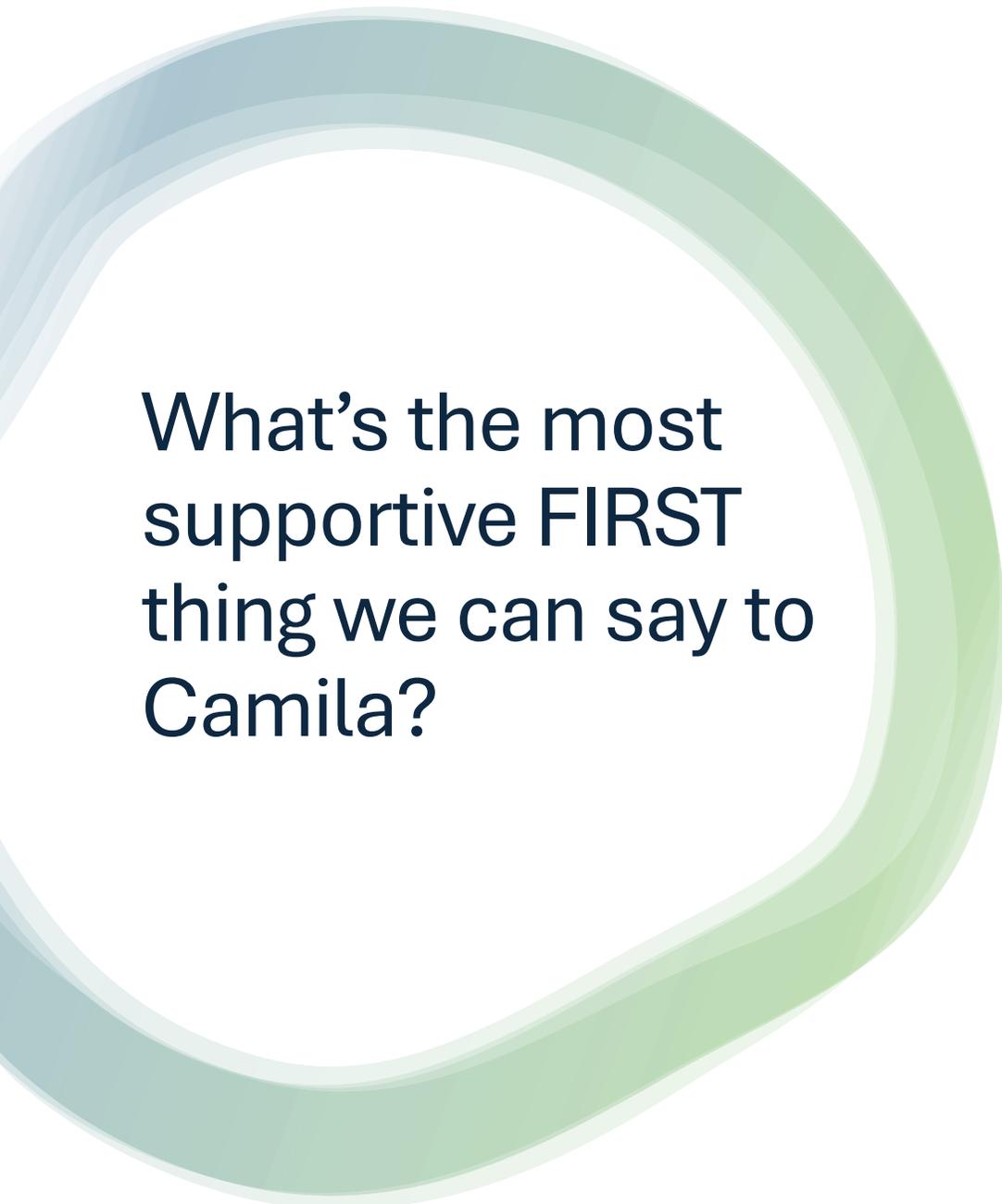
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# Camila, 15 yo (she/they)

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- Contraceptive implant placed two days ago
- “I’ve been bleeding nonstop since I got this thing in my arm”





What's the most  
supportive **FIRST**  
thing we can say to  
Camila?

- A. “It’s only been two days, and we recommend you keep it in at least for a few months to see how if the bleeding regulates.”
- B. “There are lots of treatments we can try to stop the bleeding.”
- C. “I will take this implant out at any time for any reason.”
- D. “We discussed that you could have unpredictable bleeding in the first few months with the implant, remember?”

“I will take this implant out  
at any time  
for any reason.”

# Center Camila's priorities

1. Validate, empathize
2. Elicit Camila's preferences
3. Offer to review info on bleeding side effects and management options



# Unscheduled bleeding with progestin only contraception

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- Unpredictable, not cyclic
- Less in amount
- Bleeding changes vary with dose/route of progestin
  - how someone bleeds while using the shot, IUD, or POPs does not predict how they will bleed on the implant



Progestin only pill (mini-pill, POPs)



IUD



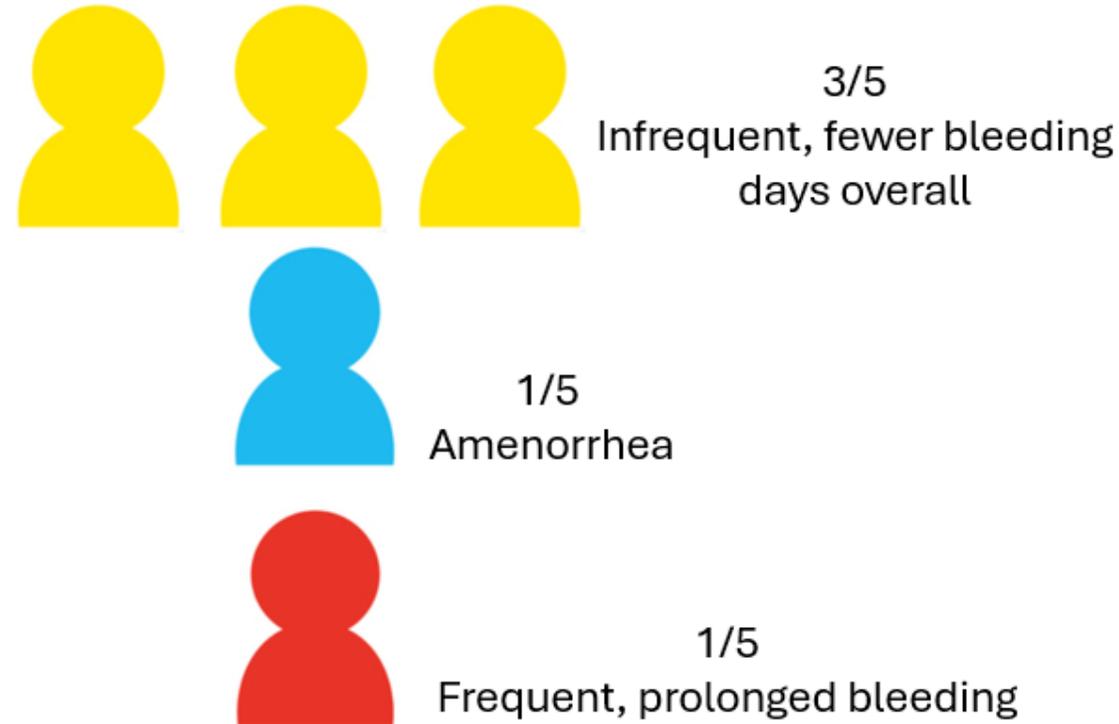
Implant  
(Nexplanon)



Birth control shot

# Bleeding patterns with the contraceptive implant

- Bleeding pattern present **at 6 months likely to continue** x 2.5-3 years



- 1/10 people have implant removed due to bleeding side effects

# Describing frequent, prolonged bleeding

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- “The hormone in the medicine can cause the inside lining of the uterus to become so thin that it can get little cracks in it.
- Small drops of blood can drip through the cracks.
- Usually the bleeding is not a lot in amount but can be every day for weeks or months at a time.”



# “What about the medicine I can take to stop the bleeding?”

- NSAIDs
- Combined hormonal contraception



Birth control ring

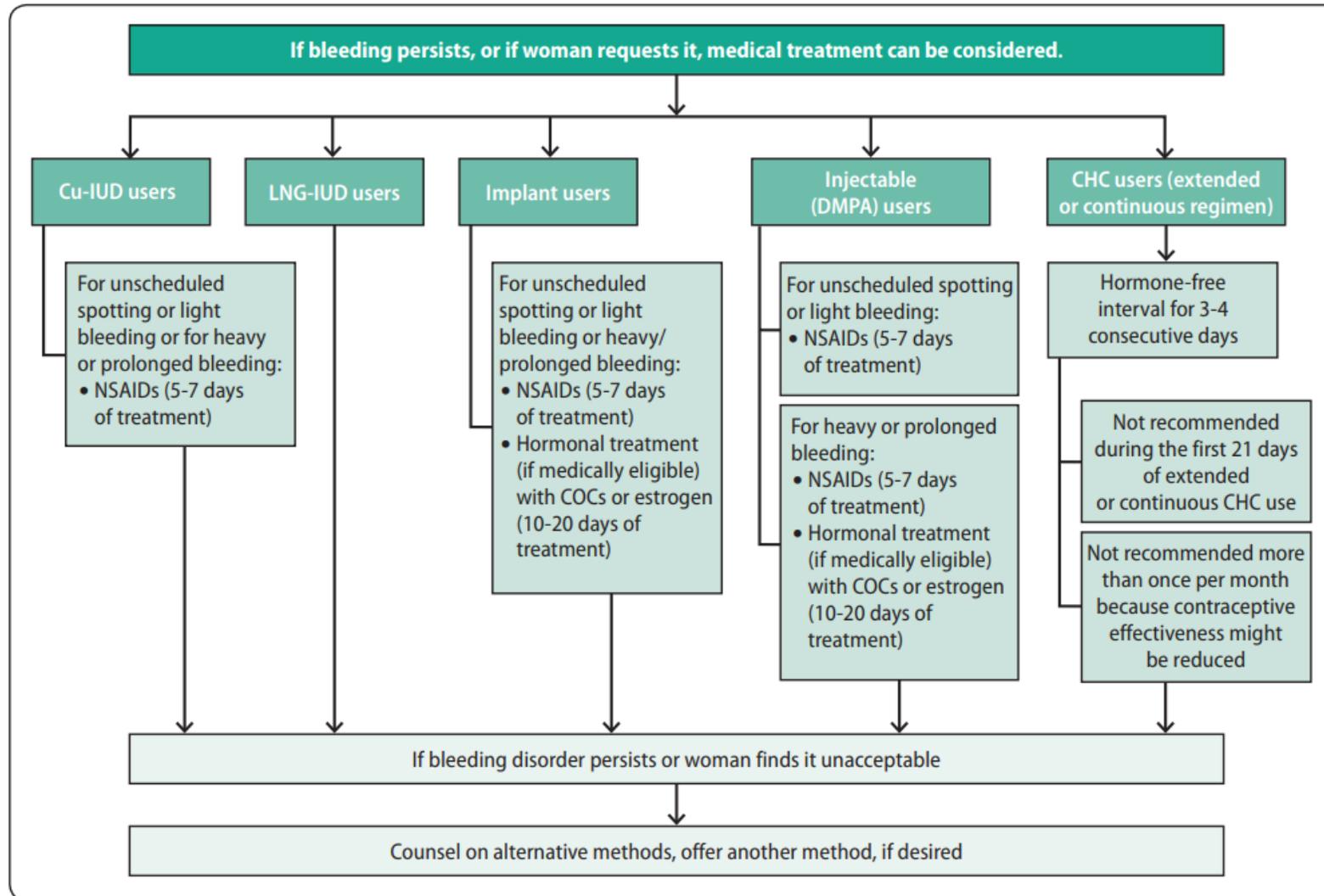


Birth control patch



Birth control pill

## Management of Women with Bleeding Irregularities While Using Contraception\*



\* If clinically warranted, evaluate for underlying condition. Treat the condition or refer for care. Heavy or prolonged bleeding, either unscheduled or menstrual, is uncommon among LNG-IUD users and implant users.

**Abbreviations:** CHC = combined hormonal contraceptive; COC = combined oral contraceptive; Cu-IUD = copper-containing intrauterine device; DMPA = depot medroxyprogesterone acetate; LNG-IUD = levonorgestrel-releasing intrauterine device; NSAIDs = nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs.

**Source:** For full recommendations and updates, see the U.S. Selected Practice Recommendations for Contraceptive Use webpage at <http://www.cdc.gov/reproductivehealth/unintendedpregnancy/uspr.htm>.



2024 U.S. Selected Practice Recommendations for Contraceptive Use (U.S. SPR).

# Oral NSAIDs for treatment of bleeding side effects

- Ibuprofen 400-800 mg q8 hours
- Naproxen 500 mg q12 hours
- x 5-7 days



# Combined hormonal contraception for bleeding side effects

- Combined oral contraceptive pill
  - containing 30-35 mcg estradiol
  - monophasic
- Vaginal contraceptive ring
- Contraceptive patch
- Duration of trial:
  - 10-20 days
  - 1-3 months
  - 3-6 months...!!!?



Birth control ring



Birth control patch



Birth control pill

# WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF BIRTH CONTROL?

Most common side effects are from birth control hormones.

## No Hormones



Condom



Internal Condom



Fertility Awareness



Pulling Out

May cause heavier bleeding & cramping.



Copper IUD

No hormones means these methods won't cause hormone-related side effects.

Some people experience side effects from birth control, others don't.

## Progestin Hormones



Hormonal IUD



Mini-Pill



Implant



Shot

May cause weight gain for some.

Common side effects include lighter, irregular periods, bloating, mood changes, and reduced sex drive.\*

Talk to a health care provider if you have side effects you don't like. They may be able to help.

## Progestin & Estrogen Hormones



Ring



Pill



Patch

There are many types of pills & each can have different side effects.

Common side effects include lighter, more regular periods, breast tenderness, nausea, vomiting, and headaches.\*

Not every method is a good match for everyone. Ask a health care provider about the possible risks and benefits for you.

\*These are not all the possible side effects for everyone, go to [Bedsider.org](https://www.bedsider.org) or talk with a health care provider to learn more.

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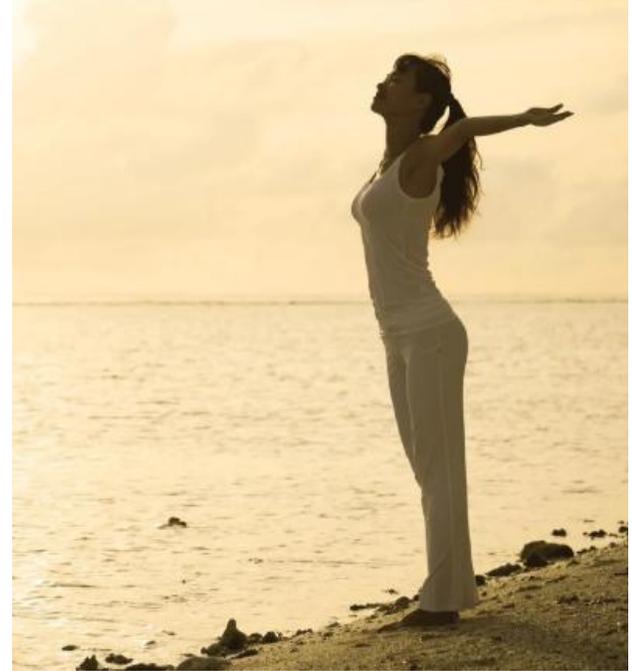
# Other treatments for bleeding side effects

- Mefenamic acid 500 mg PO q8 hr or celecoxib 200 mg PO QD
- Selective estrogen receptor modulator
  - Tamoxifen 10 mg twice daily x 7 days
- Supplemental estrogen
  - not studied with etonogestrel implant, assumed efficacy from levonorgestrel implant studies
  - Oral conjugated estrogen 1.25 mg or estradiol 2 mg QD x 7 days
  - Transdermal estrogen (estradiol 0.1 mg/day) (limited data)

“No thanks, I think I want to give my body a break from all these hormones!”



- Camila’s contraceptive implant is removed today
- Declines condoms, emergency contraception, and other contraception
- Accepts offer for f/u appointment in a month



**What makes for a successful visit?**

# How did we do with Camila?



## Person Centered Contraceptive Counseling

Giving me enough information to make the best decision about my birth control method.

Letting me say what mattered to me about my birth control method.

Respecting me as a person.

Taking my preferences about my birth control seriously.

Dehlendorf, et al. *AJOG*, 2016



# Zoe, 17 yo (they/them)

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- Using contraceptive shot x 8 months
- Liked having light bleeding every few weeks after first two shots
- Concerned that she hasn't bled for 2-3 months
- Most recent injection one month ago

# Center Zoe's priorities

1. Validate, empathize
2. Elicit Zoe's preferences
3. Offer to review info on bleeding side effects and management options



A photograph of three Black women with long, dark, wavy hair, smiling and looking towards the right. The woman in the foreground is wearing a brown jacket, the middle woman is wearing a black jacket, and the woman in the background is wearing a black top. The image is slightly faded and serves as a background for the text.

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“My cousin told me it’s not healthy if you don’t get a period”

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# Chat about bleeding preferences

- “Deciding how often you want to bleed while using birth control is totally up to you.
- Health care providers get worried about someone not having regular bleeding when there ISN’T a reason like birth control to explain it.
- The progestin hormone in birth control thins the inside lining of the uterus, so there isn’t much blood building up inside – even if you aren’t bleeding regularly or at all – while using this medicine.”

Jen says...





# “I’d rather bleed every month.”

- Last contraceptive shot one month ago
- Interested to learn about other contraception options
- “But do I have to wait for this shot to run out before I can start another medicine?”

# BIRTH CONTROL: WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO YOU?

Look inside to learn about your options.



Privacy

Start +  
Stop

Side  
Effects

Bleeding

Effectiveness

Fertility

EC

## WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO ME ABOUT MY BIRTH CONTROL?

You might already know what's important right now, or not, and what's important to you may change over time. These common questions about birth control can help you find a method that works for you.

Go to [Bedsider.org](https://www.bedsider.org) for details on all the methods, how to get them, and how to use them.



### PRIVACY

#### CAN ANYONE TELL IF I'M USING BIRTH CONTROL?

- Some birth control methods are easier to keep private than others.
- Think about who you want to keep your birth control private from and how they might discover it.

### START + STOP

#### CAN I START & STOP BIRTH CONTROL ON MY OWN?

- Some birth control methods require a health care provider to start or stop, others don't.
- Think about how that would work for you.

### SIDE EFFECTS

#### WHAT ARE THE SIDE EFFECTS OF BIRTH CONTROL?

- Many common side effects are from birth control hormones.
- Think about what side effects are okay for you.

### BLEEDING

#### HOW WILL BIRTH CONTROL CHANGE MY PERIOD?

- Some birth control methods can change how much bleeding you have or how often. These changes are safe.
- Think about what bleeding changes would be okay for you.

### EFFECTIVENESS

#### HOW WELL DOES BIRTH CONTROL WORK?

- Some birth control methods are better than others at preventing pregnancy.
- Think about how important it is to you to prevent pregnancy right now.

### FERTILITY

#### HOW SOON CAN I GET PREGNANT AFTER STOPPING BIRTH CONTROL?

- After stopping birth control, your chance of getting pregnant returns to whatever is normal for you, but it's not immediate with all methods.
- Think about if you want to be pregnant and when that might be.

### EC

#### WHAT IS EMERGENCY CONTRACEPTION (EC)?

- Emergency contraception (EC) pills and some IUDs can prevent pregnancy when used up to 5 days after sex.
- Think about if you need it now or in the future.

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# HOW WILL BIRTH CONTROL CHANGE MY PERIOD?

Some methods change how much bleeding you have or how often.

No Change



Condom



Internal Condom



Fertility Awareness



Pulling Out

These methods won't change your period.

These methods won't change your period because they don't have hormones.

Lighter & Irregular



Mini-Pill



Hormonal IUD



Implant



Shot

Your period may become much lighter, come more or less often (even every day), or stop altogether.

Not having a period with these methods is common and doesn't mean something is wrong.

Lighter & Regular



Pill



Patch



Ring

Your period may become lighter, shorter, and more regular.

Don't want to have your period? Ask your health care provider how to use these methods to skip it.

Heavier



Copper IUD

Your period will come when it normally does and may be heavier.

Talk to a health care provider if you have period changes you don't like—they may be able to help.

Once you stop using a method, your period will return to whatever is normal for you.

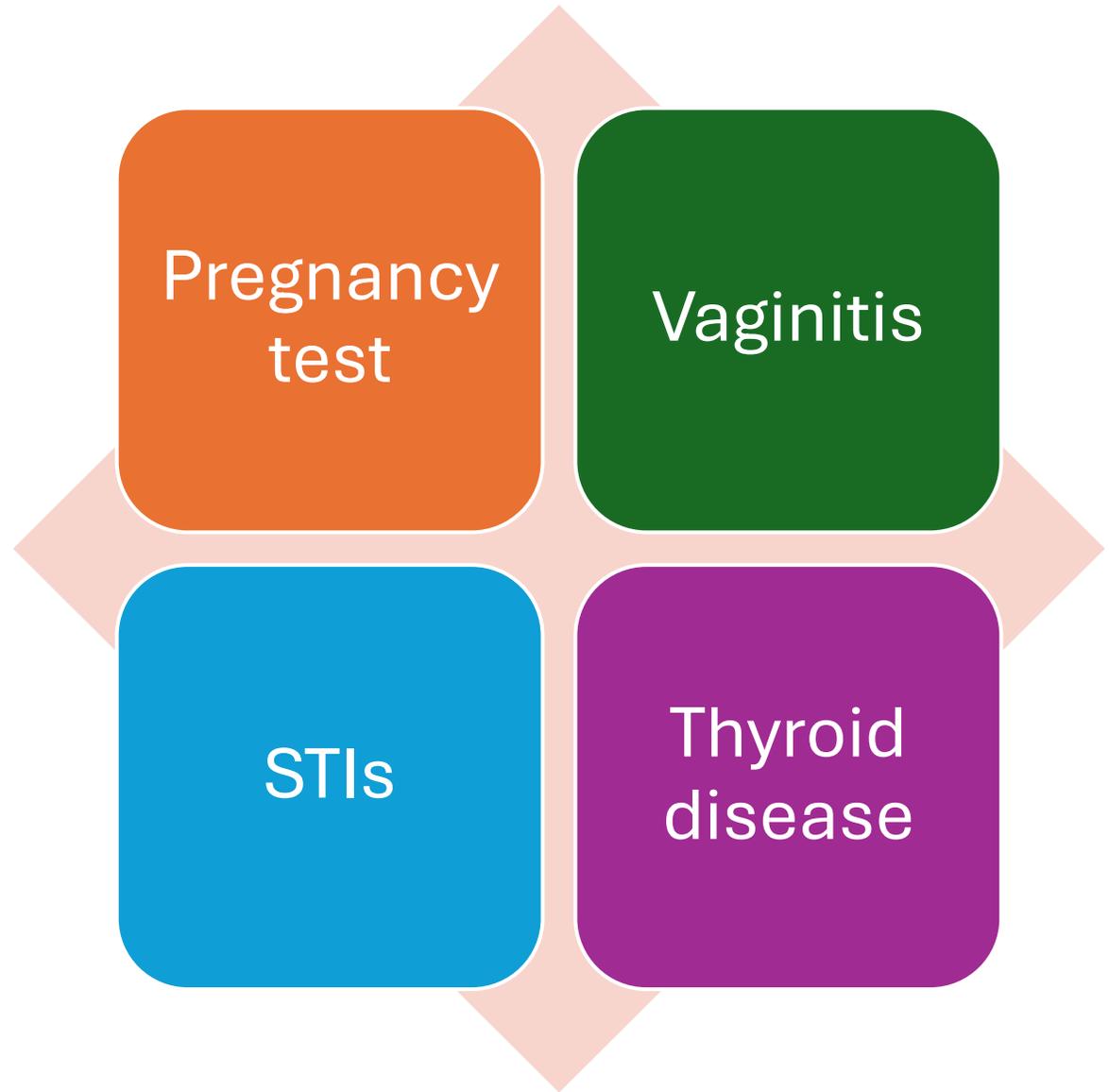
## Bleeding changes with contraceptive injection (DMPA, “depo”)

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- Amenorrhea:
  - 12% after first three months of use
  - 46% after first year
  - 50-80% amenorrhea after 1-5 years
- Sooo – unpredictable bleeding is very common, especially in the first year!



Evaluate for  
other causes  
of bleeding  
changes  
(adolescent)



# Anticipatory guidance: return to prior bleeding pattern

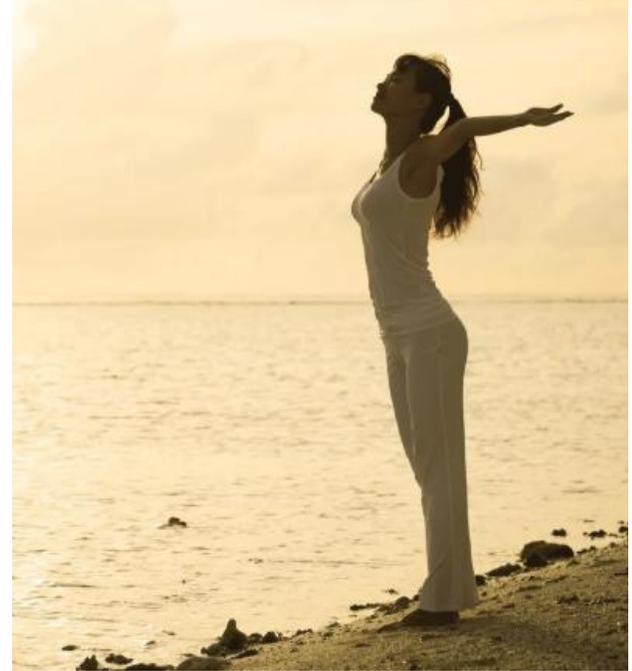
- Bleeding should return to its pre-contraception pattern after discontinuation of the method.
- In as little as one cycle for
  - Combined hormonal contraceptives (pill, patch, ring)
  - and most progestin-only methods (pill, implant, intrauterine device); however
- BUT!!! may take 12-18 months in depot medroxyprogesterone acetate (DMPA) users.

# Zoe decides to start the contraceptive patch today.

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- Pregnancy test negative
- No contraindications to combined hormonal contraception
- Zoe considering stopping patch in 1-2 months
- Cousins are supportive 😊





**What makes for a successful visit?**

# How did we do with Zoe?



## Person Centered Contraceptive Counseling

Giving me enough information to make the best decision about my birth control method.

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Respecting me as a person.

Taking my preferences about my birth control seriously.

Dehlendorf, et al. *AJOG*, 2016

# Future NMASBHC Learning Bursts!

- Oct 15: Period poverty – Making sure everyone in NM has access to menstrual products
- Oct 29: Extended Learning Burst (1 hour) – Healthy relationships in teens: Supporting the young people we serve
- Dec 10: What in the TikTok – Addressing health information from social media

<https://www.nmasbhc.org/our-work/events-training/>

Questions or ideas for future Learning Bursts?

Let us know!

jen@nmasbhc.org

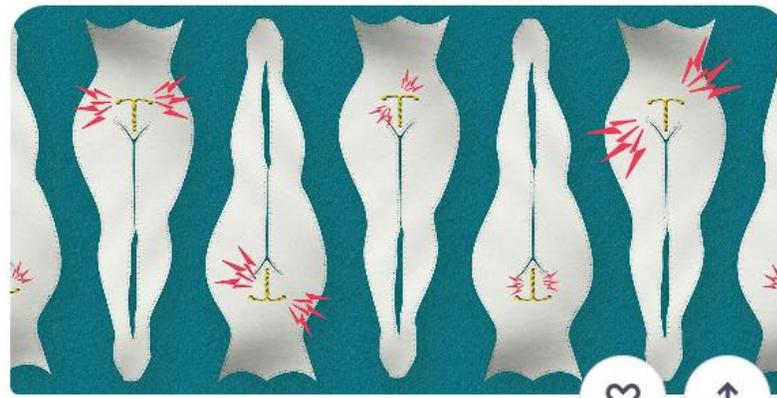
# UNM Contraception Mentoring Program Webinars



## Nov 13th- Premenstrual Disorders and Contraceptive Management

Thu, Nov 13 • 12:00 PM MST

Free



## IUD Pain Management

Thu, Dec 11 • 12:00 PM MST

Free



## January 8th- Protecting Patient Privacy: Tips For Using The EHR & Beyond

Thu, Jan 8 • 12:00 PM MST

Free



## Perimenopause and Contraception

Thu, Feb 5 • 12:00 PM MST

Free