

FACTS ABOUT BIRTH CONTROL IMPLANTS



What is an implant?

Birth control implants are small devices containing a medicine that prevents a woman's ovaries from releasing eggs, so she can't get pregnant. Nexplanon® is one brand of implant. It is a half-inch long plastic rod, about the size of a small straw, inserted under a woman's skin. Inside the plastic rod is the hormone progestin.

How does an implant work?

Progestin is a man-made hormone similar to the progesterone naturally produced in a woman's ovaries. The progestin in the implant is released slowly into the woman's body over three years. It prevents the woman from having a baby because the progestin prevents the ovaries from releasing eggs. It also thickens the cervical mucus, preventing sperm from joining with an egg. At the end of the three years, it will stop working, so a doctor or nurse will need to take out the implant and replace it with a new one, if needed.

How well does the implant work?

Tests show that the implant prevents pregnancy over 99 percent of the time. This means it works about as well as having your tubes tied, but it is not permanent.



Why is an implant a good choice for me?

Once an implant is put in, there is nothing to remember. The implant works all the time for three years. If you want to have a baby before the three years are over, a doctor or nurse can take the implant out so your ovaries can start releasing eggs again.

Are there any reasons why I couldn't use an implant?

Discuss the implant with your doctor if:

1. You think you are pregnant.
2. You have ever had breast cancer.
3. You have bleeding from your vagina and you don't know why.
4. You have severe liver problems.
5. You have heart problems or have had a heart attack or stroke.
6. You have migraines with aura.
7. You have Systemic Lupus Erythematosus (SLE).

How is an implant put in and taken out?

The implant is inserted under the skin, usually in the inside portion of the upper arm, a few inches below the armpit, although other insertion sites may be chosen instead. Local anesthetic is injected to the area of the skin where the implant is inserted. Insertion only takes a few minutes. After insertion, you should be able to feel but not see the implant. If you can't feel the bump where the implant is supposed to be anytime after insertion, see your doctor and use a backup.

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method of birth control until your doctor or nurse tells you the implant is still in place.

Removing the implant requires a small cut at the insertion site. It also is done with a local anesthetic at the site where the implant was inserted.

What are the side effects?

A majority of women will no longer have regular periods after insertion of an implant, the most common side effect is irregular period patterns:

- Periods may cease altogether;
- Periods may come at your normal time but be lighter and less painful;
- You may experience intermittent bleeding between periods; or
- You may have heavier, longer or more painful periods.

Other side effects are rare, but users sensitive to the hormone in the rod may experience headaches, moodiness, weight gain and/or breast tenderness. These symptoms usually improve over time. There is also the possibility of an allergic reaction to the implant.

Where can I get an implant?

Some health departments and private doctors' offices provide the implant.

Can I breastfeed my baby if I have an implant?

Yes. The implant does not affect breastfeeding and can be put in any time after you have your baby.

REMEMBER

An implant will not keep you from getting HIV/AIDS or any other disease you can get when you have sex. To help protect yourself, use a latex or polyurethane condom each time you have sex.



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