

How to use the contraceptive implant

Information for patients

The contraceptive implant is a very effective, convenient, and safe form of contraception which lasts for three years. The implant is a small rod which is inserted under the skin in the upper arm. The rod is 40mm long and 2mm wide - the size of a hair grip. It contains a progestogen hormone called Etonogestrel. Etonogestrel works mainly by stopping ovulation (the release of the egg from the ovary).

An implant can be inserted at the start of your procedure and will work right away. It can be inserted at the same time as mifepristone (first medication for medical abortion) without any effect on the success of the medical abortion procedure. If it is fitted after the first 5 days following your procedure, you must abstain or use condoms for 7 days before it will protect you from pregnancy. If you have unprotected sex during this time, you may require emergency contraception. Contact your doctor, local pharmacy or Chalmers Sexual Health clinic for advice. Tel: 0131 536 1070

What are the advantages of using an implant such as Nexplanon?

- The most effective method of contraception available (more than 99.9% effective).
- You do not have to remember to take a pill every day.
- You only have to think about contraception every 3 years.
- Period pain is often reduced.

What are the disadvantages of using an implant such as Nexplanon?

During the first year it is common to have irregular bleeding. Approximately 20% of women will stop bleeding altogether and another 20% will continue as they bled before. About 60% of women will get some change to their pattern. This is nothing to worry about but if it becomes inconvenient, there are ways to treat the bleeding, so please discuss this with a doctor or nurse.

How is the implant put under the skin?

- Local anaesthetic is used to numb the skin and the implant is placed under the skin of the upper arm using a special introducer. A bandage is applied to the area afterwards and can be removed 24 hours later.
- There may be some bruising and discomfort in the area around the implant for a few days, but this should wear off soon.
- There is a small risk that the implant is inserted into the vein (intravascular insertion) (1 in 1 million).

When is the implant taken out?

- A replacement is needed every 3 years. If you wish to continue with this form of contraception another implant can be fitted immediately. It requires a very small cut using local anaesthetic (as described above) to remove it and put in a new one.

- The implant can be taken out at any time you request. It loses its effect immediately after being removed.

Do other medicines interfere with the contraceptive implant?

Some prescribed medicines may interfere with the progestogen including the herbal remedy St John's Wort. Tell the doctor, nurse, or pharmacist that you have a progestogen implant if you are prescribed another medicine.

Safer sex

The implant does not protect you from sexually transmitted infection. Use condoms with new partners and test regularly.

If you have any problems, do not hesitate to contact us.

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