

Implant

What is a sub-dermal implant?

The implant is a thin, flexible plastic tube about the size of a cardboard matchstick. It is filled with the female hormone progestin, which is placed under the skin of the upper arm. It protects against pregnancy for up to three years. Our office currently uses the Nexplanon implant.

How does the implant work?

Like other forms of birth control, such as the birth control shot, the implant slowly releases a hormone – progestin. The progestin in the implant works by keeping a woman's ovaries from releasing eggs – ovulation. Pregnancy cannot happen if there is no egg to join the sperm. The hormone in the implant also prevents pregnancy by thickening a woman's cervical mucus. The mucus blocks sperm and keeps it from joining with the egg.

How effective is the implant?

Effectiveness is an important and common concern when choosing a birth control method. The implant is very effective. Less than 1 out of 100 women a year will become pregnant using the implant. It lasts up to three years. It is more effective than birth control pills and as effective as an IUD (intrauterine device).

Keep in mind the implant does not protect against sexually transmitted infections. Use a male condom (not lambskin) or female condom to reduce the risk of infection.

How safe is the implant?

Most women can use the implant safely. But all medications have some risks. You should not use the implant if you are pregnant, have breast cancer, or have severe liver disease, heart disease certain types of lupus or unexplained vaginal bleeding.

What are the benefits of the implant?

Using the implant is safe, simple, and convenient. Women like the implant because: You can become pregnant quickly when the implant is removed.

- The implant can be used while breastfeeding.
- The implant can be used by women who cannot take estrogen.
- The implant gives continuous long-lasting birth control without sterilization.
- There is no medicine to take every day.

What are the disadvantages of the implant?

Some women may have side effects while using the implant, but most women adjust to it with few or no problems. Irregular bleeding is the most common side effect, especially in the first 6-12 months of use.

- For most women, periods become fewer and lighter after the initial 6-12 months. After one year, 1 out of 3 women will stop having periods completely.
- Some women have longer, heavier periods.
- Some women have increased spotting and light bleeding between periods.

These side effects are completely normal. Some women may worry that they are pregnant if they do not have a regular period. When the implant is used correctly, it is very effective. If you are concerned about a possible pregnancy, you can always take a pregnancy test.

Even less likely are these side effects:

- Acne
- Increase in appetite
- Decrease in sex drive
- Depression
- Discoloring or scarring of the skin over the implant
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Nausea
- Pain at the insertion site
- Sore breasts

Serious side effects of the implant:

Serious problems usually have warning signs. Tell your health care provider immediately if:

- You have bleeding, pus, or increased redness, or pain at insertion site.
- You have unusually heavy or prolonged bleeding from your vagina.
- The implant comes out or you have concerns about its location.

How is the implant put in and taken out?

After taking your medical history and giving you a physical exam, your health care provider will numb a small area of your arm with a painkiller. The implant is slid under the skin using a special tool. Insertion takes only a few minutes.

After insertion, be sure to tell all health care providers that you see that you are using the implant.

The implant can be removed at any time. Your health care provider will numb the area with a painkiller and will usually make one tiny cut to remove the implant. Removal takes longer than insertion. A new implant may be inserted at this time. Pregnancy can happen anytime after the implant is removed.

If you get your implant during the first five days of your period, you are protected against pregnancy immediately. Otherwise, you will need to use some form of backup birth control – like a condom, or spermicide, – for the first week after getting the implant.

How do I get the implant? How much does it cost?

You need to see a health care provider to get the implant. The cost to you is based on a sliding fee scale based on your income and ability to pay. For more information call Family Planning Services of Lorain County at 440-322- 7626.