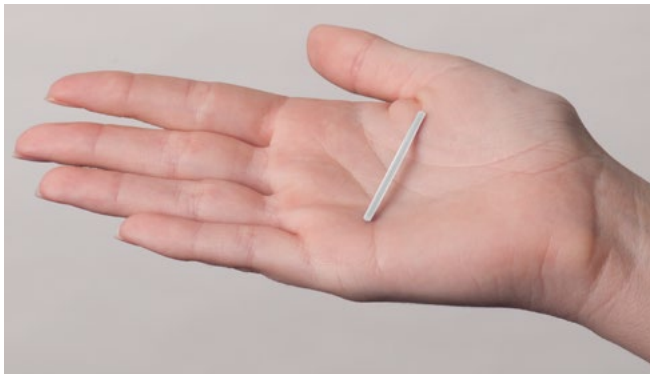


What is the contraceptive implant?

The contraceptive implant is a small, flexible rod about the size of a match stick. The implant is put under the skin of the upper arm. It can stay there for up to 3 years. The implant slowly releases a progestogen hormone called etonogestrel into the blood stream. This can prevent pregnancy for up to 3 years.



Progestogen hormones are also used in the contraceptive pill and are like the natural hormone progesterone that is made by the ovary. The contraceptive implant available in Australia is called Implanon NXT.

How does the contraceptive implant work?

- It prevents a woman's eggs from being released from her ovaries (ovulation).
- It thickens the mucus in the cervix (the neck of the uterus) so that the sperm cannot enter the uterus.

How well does the contraceptive implant work?

The contraceptive implant is very effective at preventing pregnancy. It is 99.95% effective. This means that if 1000 women use the contraceptive implant for a year, only one woman would become pregnant.

Who can use the contraceptive implant?

Most women can use the contraceptive implant. It can be used by women who cannot use contraception that has the hormone oestrogen in it.

You should not use the contraceptive implant if:

- you think you are pregnant
- you have some health conditions including a history of breast cancer or severe liver disease - your doctor will need to talk to you about this so that you can decide if it is safe for you to use

- you have unexplained bleeding from your vagina - your doctor will need to talk to you about this before putting in the implant
- you take medicines which may stop the contraceptive implant from working properly including some epileptic medications and herbal remedies

It is important to talk to your doctor or nurse to see if the contraceptive implant is a good choice for you. If you are at risk of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) you can use condoms at the same time as using the implant.

Advantages

- it is 99.95% effective
- it lasts for up to 3 years
- your fertility returns to normal as soon as it is taken out
- it is a cost-effective type of contraception
- some women have very light bleeding or no bleeding at all when the implant is in place
- it usually makes periods less painful
- it is safe to use when breastfeeding
- it can be used by most women who cannot use contraception that has oestrogen in it

Disadvantages

- it doesn't protect against sexually transmissible infections (STIs)
- will change your normal monthly period - you may have:
 - no bleeding at all
 - light bleeding occasionally
 - light bleeding often
 - heavy bleeding occasionally
 - heavy bleeding often
 - talk to your doctor if you are unhappy with your bleeding pattern as they can recommend treatment to control the bleeding
- it needs a small procedure to put in and take out
- it can cause bruising on your arm when first put in
- it can have hormonal side-effects including:
 - headache
 - nausea or bloating
 - breast tenderness
 - acne
 - mood changes
 - lowered interest in sex

How is the contraceptive implant put in?

The implant is prescribed by a doctor. The implant can be put in:

- at Family Planning NSW clinics
- by GPs, nurses and gynaecologists who have been specially trained

The doctor or nurse will inject local anaesthetic under the skin on the inside of your upper arm. This will make the procedure more comfortable. The procedure takes 5-10 minutes.

If the implant is put in during the first 5 days of your period it will start to work straight away. If it is put in at other times it will take 7 days to work - you will need to use another method of contraception or not have sex for 7 days.

How is the contraceptive implant taken out?

The implant can be left in the arm for 3 years. The implant can be taken out earlier if you want to get pregnant or if you don't want to use this type of contraception anymore. The implant is taken out:

- under local anaesthetic
- by a specially trained doctor or nurse

The implant must be taken out 3 years after it was put in. If you want another implant a new implant can be put in the same arm immediately after the old one is removed. Your periods will go back to normal soon after the implant is taken out. If you do not want to get pregnant you need to use another method of contraception as soon as the implant is removed.

For more information

Family Planning NSW Talkline –
www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline or 1300 658 886

National Relay Service (for deaf people) –
13 36 77

TIS National's interpreting service –
131 450

Visit your nearest Family Planning NSW clinic –
www.fpnsw.org.au/clinics

Family Planning NSW client resource on contraception – [What suits me?](#)