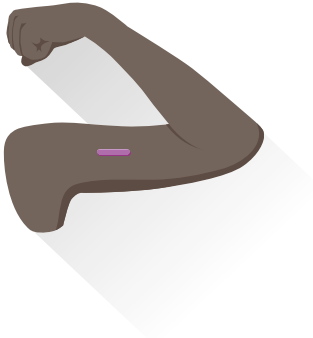


Implanon®

The contraceptive implant is a small rod that is placed under the skin and releases the hormone progesterone into the blood stream. The brand name is Implanon®



Street names	The rod, the stick, the bar
Medical names	Contraceptive Implant, Implanon® (brand)
Effectiveness	99.9%
It lasts	3 years, unless you have it removed earlier
Fertility	Ovulation returns when the implant is taken out
Who can use it?	Females of any age from menarche to menopause
Hormones	Contains progesterone hormone
Visibility	Moderately discreet, it can be felt by touching the insertion site on the arm.
STIs	No protection
Side effects	Allow 4 months for bleeding pattern to adjust to the hormones
Cost	Between \$7 and \$195 depending on your age and if you have a healthcare card
Where to get it	It is available from True clinics and General Practitioners

How does it work?

Implanon® works for 3 years by:

- Preventing ovulation (egg release from the ovary)
- Thickening of the mucus of the cervix so that sperm cannot enter the uterus (womb)

What are the advantages of Implanon®?

- Highly effective (99.9%). This means that fewer than 1 woman in every 100 using this method of contraception for a year would become pregnant.
- Long-acting (lasts 3 years)
- Reversible and rapid return to usual fertility (most women ovulate within the first month after removal of the implant)
- Inexpensive – cost effective
- Some women have no vaginal bleeding
- No pills – no injections

What are the disadvantages of Implanon®?

A change to the pattern of vaginal bleeding is the most noticeable result of using the implant. The changes are due to the effect of the hormone on the lining of the uterus and through ovulation suppression. It is not possible to predict what the pattern will be for any one woman.

Changes can include:

- Changes in bleeding frequency (approximately 1 in every 5 women have no bleeding at all)
- Infrequent bleeding
- Prolonged and/or frequent bleeding

For women experiencing continued bleeding problems, a change of contraceptive method may need to be considered.

Women who are unhappy with their bleeding pattern should talk to their doctor.

Other disadvantages or possible risks of Implanon®?

- It does not protect against sexually transmissible infections (STIs).
- It requires a minor procedure for insertion and removal.
- Some women experience skin bruising when it is first put in the arm:
 - A small scar
 - Difficulty in removing the implant
 - Allergic reaction to the local anaesthetic or implant material

Possible side effects of Implanon® include:

- Headaches
- Mood changes
- Weight gain
- Breast tenderness
- Loss of sexual interest
- New onset or worsening of acne
- Abdominal pain

Implanon® does not protect against STIs.

To make sure you are protected against pregnancy and STIs use Implanon® plus a condom for every sexual encounter.

Does Implanon® suit all women?

Most women can safely use Implanon®. Your doctor will review the suitability of the method with you prior to insertion.

Who cannot use Implanon®?

This method is not suitable for women:

- With a current or past breast cancer
- With unexplained vaginal bleeding (your doctor will need to investigate this prior to the insertion of the implant)
- Using certain medications which may prevent the contraceptive implant from working effectively
- With severe liver conditions such as cirrhosis
- Who experience stroke or a cardiovascular event whilst using the method

How is the contraceptive implant inserted and removed?

A local anaesthetic is given into the skin and the implant is inserted through a small incision in the skin – usually on the inside of the upper non-dominant arm.

The implant is normally inserted during the first 5 days of the menstrual period but it can be inserted at other times if there is no chance that the woman could already be pregnant.

If it is inserted in the first 5 days of the menstrual period it will be immediately effective.

If it is inserted at other times it will not be effective for 7 days.

The implant can be left in the arm for 3 years (or removed earlier if desired). Removal is a simple procedure using a small amount of local anaesthetic.

Fertility after an implant?

When the implant is removed, menstrual cycles and fertility return rapidly.

If you do not wish to fall pregnant, you must consider alternate methods of contraception straight away.

The implant is not effective after 3 years so it should be removed and the same or another contraceptive method used. A single procedure can be used to remove an old implant and put in a new one.

Women should reattend as advised by the treating clinician, otherwise women should attend if

- They experience troublesome side effects
- The implant can no longer be felt
- It has significantly moved or changed shape.

To make an appointment at a True clinic, visit our website for contact details of a clinic near you.

www.true.org.au