

## Thinking of a Nexplanon (Contraceptive Implant)?

### How it works

The implant is a small, flexible rod, about the size of a small matchstick, that is placed under the skin in your upper arm and can be left for up to three years. It works by releasing the hormone progesterone which stops the ovary from releasing an egg and thickens the cervical mucus to make it difficult for sperm to enter the womb. It also thins the lining of the uterus to prevent a fertilised egg implanting.

You can have the Implant put it at any time during your menstrual cycle, **as long as you're not pregnant.**

If the Implant is fitted during the first 5 days of your cycle, you'll be immediately protected against becoming pregnant.

If it's fitted on any other day of your cycle, you'll need to use additional contraception (e.g. condoms) for 7 days.

### Advantages and disadvantages of the Implant

#### Advantages:

- It provides 3 years of contraception.
- It's one of the most effective forms of contraception available in the UK. It is more than 99% effective.
- It does not interrupt sex.
- Your periods may become lighter, shorter and less painful.
- It's safe to use an implant if you're breastfeeding.
- It may be a good option if you cannot take the hormone oestrogen, which is used in the combined contraceptive pill.
- Your fertility will return to normal as soon as the implant is removed.

#### Disadvantages:

- Your periods may become irregular with prolonged spotting, stop completely, or last longer, which may not be suitable for some women.
- Some women experience temporary side effects such as headaches, mood changes and breast tenderness, but these should settle within a few months.
- Some women may get acne, or if you already have acne it may get worse.
- It is not suitable for women using enzyme-inducing drugs (this includes some medicines for epilepsy, HIV, TB and some antibiotics). You should always tell your doctor or nurse that you are using the implant if you are prescribed any medication.
- It requires a small procedure to fit and remove it. After it is first fitted you may feel some bruising or tenderness around the implant. There will be a small scar at the insertion and removal sites.



- An implant does not protect you against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) so you may need to use condoms as well.

## **Risks of the Implant**

- In rare cases the area of the skin where the implant has been fitted can become infected. If this were to happen, you may need antibiotics.

You should also seek advice if:

- You can't feel the implant
- The implant feels like its changed shape
- You notice any changes to the skin or feel any pain at the site of the implant
- You become pregnant

## **Who can use an Implant?**

Most women can use an implant. A GP will ask about your medical history to check if an implant is suitable contraception for you.

The Implant may not be suitable if you:

- have breast cancer or have had it in the past
- have cancer of the reproductive organs or have had it in the past
- have liver disease
- have unexplained bleeding between periods or after sex
- have arterial disease or a history of heart disease or stroke
- have a medical condition or take medications that may affect which contraception you can use
- don't want your periods to change
- think you might be pregnant

## **Using an Implant after giving birth**

An Implant can be put in any time after giving birth.

If it's fitted before Day 21 after birth, you'll be immediately protected against becoming pregnant.

If it's fitted on or after Day 21, you'll need to use additional contraception for the next 7 days.

It's safe to use an Implant when you're breastfeeding, and it will not affect your milk supply.

## **Using an Implant after miscarriage or termination of pregnancy**

An implant can be fitted immediately after miscarriage or termination of pregnancy, and you will be protected against pregnancy straight away.

## Fitting and Removing the Implant

We strongly urge you to watch the video found on the sexual health matters website which is linked below.

<https://youtu.be/WLOa0yLJRSI>

You will then need to make a **"10 minute pre-fit telephone consultation"** appointment with one of the Implant fitting doctors (Drs Fenwick or Jennison) before you book in for an Implant fit. This allows you to discuss your contraceptive needs, the pros and cons of the Implant, and to make an informed decision.

An Implant fitting or removal appointment normally takes about 30 minutes. Please make sure you have plenty of time for your appointment. Where possible find childcare for small children.

**An Implant can be fitted any time during your menstrual cycle as long as there is no possibility that you could be pregnant.**

**Please avoid unprotected intercourse from the first day of your period or make sure you have used contraception very carefully for at least three weeks before your appointment.**

A local anaesthetic is used to numb the area on the inside of your upper arm.

The implant is then inserted under your skin. It is similar to having an injection. You won't need any stitches after the implant has been fitted. You should be able to feel the Implant under your skin, but it will not affect how you move your arm.

The Implant works for 3 years before it needs to be replaced. The Implant can be removed at any time. It is a short procedure during which a local anaesthetic will be used. A tiny cut will be made in your skin to gently pull the implant out. If you want to have another Implant fitted it can be done at the same time.

## After Your Fitting Appointment

Please keep any information you are given in a safe place. We do not send you a reminder when your Implant is due to expire.

Keep the pressure bandage on for 1 day, and the steristrips and plaster on for 3 days.

Please keep the site of your Implant fitting dry for 3 days.

Bruising is common and will disappear within days-weeks.

Avoid any strenuous activity for a few days with the arm that has had the Implant fitted or removed.

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