



Family Planning Tasmania
sexuality education & clinical services

WHAT IS IT?

Implanon is a small plastic rod containing the hormone progestogen, that is inserted just underneath the skin of the upper inner arm and provides protection against pregnancy for the **3** years it is left in place.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

It works by stopping ovulation (release of the egg from the ovary) and by making the lining of the uterus thin so that it does not allow a pregnancy to grow. It also makes the cervical mucus at the entrance to the uterus thicker so sperm have difficulty getting through.

HOW EFFECTIVE IS IT?

It is a very effective method of stopping pregnancy with less than a 1% failure rate. This is partly because there is no need for the person to remember to take something every day.

HOW IS IMPLANON INSERTED?

The doctor will put a small mark on the skin of the inside of the upper inner arm. After cleaning the skin with antiseptic the doctor injects the area with a little local anaesthetic so the rest of the insertion is more comfortable. This might sting a little. When the anaesthetic has taken effect the doctor will insert the device that contains the plastic implant just underneath the skin. A dressing and a bandage is then applied that should be left in place for 24 hours.

Some bruising and discomfort around the implant is very common and can last for up to a week.

HOW IS IMPLANON REMOVED?

To remove the implant, a small amount of local anaesthetic is inserted just underneath the end of the implant and a small nick is made in the skin. The end of the implant is then pushed through this nick in the skin or grabbed with a small instrument and removed. This leaves a small mark on the skin. A dressing is then applied for 24 hours.

It is very **important** to have the Implanon removed after three years as leaving it in place longer than this may increase the risk of an ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy in the tube), and it will not be effective as a contraceptive.

It is possible to have another Implanon inserted at the same time the other one is removed. The contraceptive effect of Implanon wears off very quickly when it is removed, with most women returning to a normal menstrual cycle within a month. Some women have fallen pregnant a few days after the Implanon was removed.

WHO CAN USE IMPLANON?

- Anybody requiring effective, convenient contraception.
- Those requiring long-term contraception (although the implant can be removed at any time).
- Those who want contraception that is quickly reversible.
- Those that don't mind having injections or something placed underneath the skin.
- Breastfeeding mothers

WHO ISN'T SUITABLE FOR IMPLANON?

- Those who don't like injections or the idea of something being placed under the skin for up to three years.
- Those who would be concerned by an irregular bleeding pattern.

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WHAT SIDE EFFECTS ARE LIKELY?

The most common side effect is irregular bleeding, which can vary from no bleeding at all to troublesome frequent bleeding.

Other side effects are rare but users sensitive to the hormone in the rod may experience effects like: headaches, weight gain and breast symptoms.

WHERE CAN I GET IT?

Implanon must be obtained on a script from a doctor. Most doctors will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the device at one visit and make arrangements for a woman to return for insertion at the correct time in her cycle, when the doctor can ensure the woman is not pregnant. You can have the Implanon inserted at your nearest Family Planning Clinic.

For further information contact Family Planning Tasmania.

FPT acknowledges the contribution of Family Planning Queensland in the development of this fact sheet.

Disclaimer:

FPT has taken every responsibility to ensure that the information contained in this fact sheet is up-to-date and accurate. As information and knowledge constantly changes, readers are advised to confirm that the information contained complies with present research, legislation and policy guidelines. FPT accepts no responsibility for difficulties that may arise as a result of an individual acting on advice and recommendations contained in the document.



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