

What Is It?

The contraceptive implant is a single flexible rod about the size of a matchstick that is inserted under the skin of the upper arm by a health care professional. It is approved for up to 3 years of use.

How Does It Work?

The implant releases a hormone called progestin and prevents pregnancy in three ways: 1) it stops the ovaries from releasing an egg each month (although not consistently); 2) it thickens cervical mucus, which makes it harder for sperm to reach the egg; and 3) it thins the lining of the uterus.

How Do I Use It?

The implant is inserted into your arm by a health care professional. A small area on your upper arm may be numbed with a local anesthetic. The implant is placed under the skin with a special inserter. No incision is made. The procedure takes only a few minutes.

Benefits

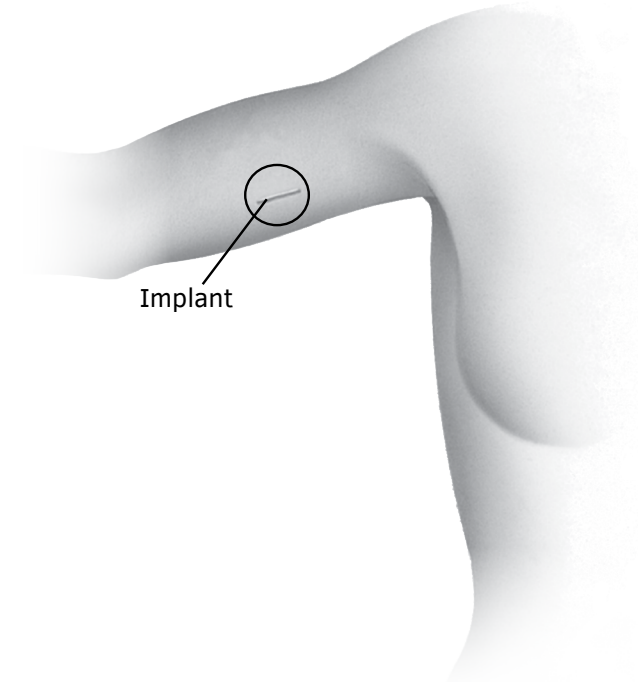
- You do not need to remember it every day.
- It can be inserted right after an abortion, a miscarriage, or childbirth and is safe to use while breastfeeding.
- It does not interfere with sex.
- If you wish to get pregnant or want to stop using the implant for any reason, simply have it removed by a health care professional.

Risks

- Problems with insertion or removal of the implant. These problems are rare.
- Although rare, if a woman gets pregnant while the implant is inserted, there is a slightly increased risk of ectopic pregnancy.

Possible Side Effects

- Unpredictable bleeding, including heavier periods, lighter periods, lack of periods, longer periods, infrequent periods, or bleeding between periods. Bleeding patterns improve over time for most women.
- Headaches
- Acne
- Depression
- Weight gain
- Dizziness
- Mood changes



Effectiveness of implant compared to other methods	Highly effective
	← Implant
	Less effective
Protects against STIs, including HIV?	No
Effective right away?	Yes, if it is inserted within 5 days of the start of your menstrual period. If it is inserted at any other time, avoid sexual intercourse or use a back-up method, such as a condom, for the next 7 days.
OK with breastfeeding?	Yes

*Abbreviations: HIV, human immunodeficiency virus; STIs, sexually transmitted infections.

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