



OFFICE OF POPULATION AFFAIRS

Contraceptive Implant

THE FACTS



Contraceptive Implant THE FACTS



Quick Facts

Effectiveness in Preventing Pregnancy:

- Of 100 women using contraceptive implants each year, less than one may become pregnant.

Use:

- Health care provider inserts a single rod under the skin of the upper arm.

STI Protection:

- No

Office Visit Required:

- Yes, only available through a healthcare provider.

What is the Contraceptive Implant?

A contraceptive implant is a birth control method that uses a thin, matchstick-sized, plastic rod that is placed under the skin inside the upper arm. The implant releases progestin, a hormone found in birth control pills. Hormones are chemicals that control how different parts of your body work. The progestin causes cervical mucus to thicken and the lining of the uterus to thin. This keeps sperm from reaching the egg.



Contraceptive Implant THE FACTS



How does it work?

A health care provider will give you local anesthesia, then put the implant under the skin of your arm with a special needle. It is a simple procedure, done in the office, and takes only a few minutes. It may take a week for the implant to begin working, so ask if you need to use a back-up method of birth control—like a condom—in the meantime.



The implant will work well in preventing pregnancy for up to three years. A health care provider can easily remove the old implant and replace it with a new one at that time. The rod can also be taken out anytime if you decide you want to get pregnant.



How do I get it?

A healthcare professional needs to put the implant under your skin. To search for a family planning center near you where you can get an implant, go to <http://www.hhs.gov/opa/>

How effective is it?

Of 100 women using implants, less than one may become pregnant each year. An implant is effective in preventing pregnancy when left in place for up to three years.



Advantages of implants

- Along with IUDs, implants are the most cost-effective reversible method of birth control
- Safe and effective in preventing pregnancy
- Maintenance free for up to three years
- If a woman wants to become pregnant, it is very easy for a health care provider to remove the implant.
- There is nothing you have to remember, which is great for people who have a hard time remembering or don't want to use other methods like the pill, patch or ring.
- Your male partner doesn't have to know about it or do anything different.



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Drawbacks of implants

- Requires a clinic visit
- Provides no protection against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV
- May cause light or irregular bleeding or changes to a woman's period, especially in the first few months
- Possible weight gain
- Possible breast or abdominal pain



Sources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- [Unintended Pregnancy Prevention: Contraception](#)

"Contraceptive Technology," Robert A. Hatcher, MD, MPH et. al., 20th revised edition, Contraceptive Technology Communications Inc., 2011

Food and Drug Administration

- [Birth Control: Medicines to Help You](#)

Office on Women's Health

- [Girlshealth.gov: Types of Birth Control](#)

Reviewed: August 2014 | Reviewed by: Association of Reproductive Health Professionals

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U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
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Washington, D.C., 20003

