

What is the implant?

The implant is a type of hormonal birth control. It is a tiny plastic rod, about the size of a matchstick. The implant contains a progesterone-like hormone called etonogestrel (et-oh-no-JES-trel) that prevents pregnancy. The implant is easily inserted under the skin of your arm by a health care provider.

How effective is the implant?

The implant is very effective. Less than 1 out of 100 women with the implant will get pregnant each year. The implant is as effective as sterilization, but your ability to become pregnant quickly returns once the implant is removed.

How does the implant work?

The implant is easily inserted in about one minute under the skin of your upper arm. Once inserted, the implant slowly releases a hormone into your body. This hormone causes several things to happen that prevent pregnancy:

- Your ovaries stop releasing eggs.
- Thick cervical mucus forms and blocks the opening to your uterus.
- The lining of your uterus thins, which keeps a fertilized egg from attaching to your uterus.

The implant lasts up to 3 years. After that, the hormone supply runs out and it stops working. If you want to keep using this method, you have to get a new implant. Your health care provider can insert a new implant once the old one is removed. Removal takes about three minutes.

What are the benefits of using the implant?

- You do not have to think about your birth control every day or every time you have sex.
- The implant works for 3 years.
- If you want to stop using the implant, it can easily and quickly be removed at any time.
- The implant is safe to use while breastfeeding.
- The implant can be a good birth control method for women who cannot use estrogen.

What are the downsides of using the implant?

- The implant does not protect against sexually transmitted infections.
- The implant may cause irregular bleeding. Some women have heavy and/or longer periods. Others have periods that are lighter and occur less often. Some women stop getting their period all together.

Where can I get the implant?

A health care provider can easily insert or remove the implant. If your health care provider isn't trained to insert the implant, ask for a referral to someone who is trained.

Where can I get more information?

For more information on the contraceptive implant, talk to your health care provider.

Compare the implant to other birth control options using ARHP's Method Match at www.arhp.org/MethodMatch.