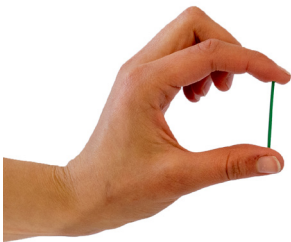


# CONTRACEPTIVE IMPLANT

## FACT SHEET

### What is the contraceptive implant?

The contraceptive implant is a plastic rod that is inserted under the skin of the inner, upper arm to stop pregnancy by slowly releasing progestogen (this is similar to a natural hormone produced by the body). It is often referred to as Implanon.



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### How does it work?

Progestogen works by:

- stopping the release of an egg by the ovary (ovulation)
- making the mucus (sticky fluid) at the opening of the uterus thicker so sperm can't get through.

### How effective is it?

It is an extremely effective method of contraception (99.95%).

### How do I get the contraceptive implant?

The contraceptive implant has to be inserted by a health professional trained in this procedure. Make an appointment with your doctor or at SHINE SA to discuss this method and get a prescription. You will then need to have the implant inserted. This may be done on the same day or it may require a second appointment.

### How is it inserted?

An area on the inner arm above the elbow is cleaned and then numbed with local anaesthetic. Then the doctor or nurse puts the implant under the skin. After the implant is inserted, a dressing is put on which should stay on for 3-5 days. The arm is bandaged to reduce bruising, this bandage should be left on for up to 24 hours.

### When does it start working?

It's immediately effective if:

- inserted during the first 5 days of your menstrual cycle, which starts with the first day of bleeding.
- inserted within 21 days of having a baby
- inserted within 5 days of having an abortion or miscarriage
- replacing an existing contraceptive implant that has not been in for more than 3 years
- inserted while using another form of contraception that continues for 7 more days after the implant is inserted.

The implant is effective after 7 days if it is inserted at any other time. Other contraceptive measures such as condoms should be used for these 7 days. If changing from the Pill or another method of contraception discuss the best time for insertion with your doctor.

### How long does it last?

It is effective as a contraceptive for 3 years. The implant should be taken out and replaced with a new implant every 3 years. It can be removed earlier than 3 years if it is no longer wanted.

### How do I stop using it?

To stop using the implant it needs to be removed by a trained health professional in this procedure. Before removal, the area of skin will be cleaned and numbed with local anaesthetic. A small cut to the skin over the top of the implant is made to find the tip and then it is removed.

## When will I be fertile again?

There is a rapid return to fertility after removal. Most people return to their normal menstrual cycle and fertility within a month of removing the implant. If you do not want to be pregnant you need to use other contraception as soon as it is removed.

## What are the benefits of the implant?

- It is highly effective (99.95% effective).
- It lasts a long time (up to three years).
- It is reversible and the return to fertility is rapid.
- It does not need you to remember to take a pill every day.
- It is a cost-effective method of contraception.
- It may reduce painful periods, premenstrual syndrome (PMS) and acne in some people.

## What are the side effects?

You may not get regular bleeding.

**Bleeding patterns** are likely to change:

- bleeding may become lighter and less painful
- bleeding may stop altogether
- bleeding may continue and not stop.

Many people have no other side effects. Some may experience the following problems:

- **Acne** may develop, improve or get worse.
- **Weight gain** can occur over time and is often thought to be caused by the implant, but has not been directly proven.
- **Headaches, breast pain, hair thinning and mood changes** can occur but usually go away within a few weeks/months.
- **Bruising** and mild soreness at the site of insertion or removal can last up to 2 weeks. A small scar remains.

Occasionally the implant can be difficult to feel or remove and you may need to have an ultrasound to check its position in your arm.

## What should I do if I get changes in bleeding?

Irregular bleeding is a common side effect and will usually settle down within 3 months. Whatever your bleeding pattern, the implant is still effective.

If the bleeding does not settle or you are unhappy with the bleeding you can see a doctor for medications that can help with this. You don't have to wait until 3 months to do this.

## Who can use the implant?

This method suits most people no matter what age up to menopause, who don't mind having an implant under their skin. It's safe for heavy smokers and people with diabetes, high blood pressure and high cholesterol.

## Who should not use the implant?

People who are pregnant, people with breast cancer, people with unexplained vaginal bleeding, people with severe liver disease or using medication that affects the liver, should not use the implant.

## Where can I get the implant?

The implant is prescribed by a doctor and can be inserted at SHINE SA clinics as well as by doctors, nurses and gynaecologists who have been trained in this procedure.

**Injectable contraception does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or blood-borne viruses (BBVs). Practise safer sex. Using condoms reduces the risk of STIs and BBVs.**

CONTACT  
SHINE SA

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### Clinic & Counselling Appointments and General Enquiries

Tel 8300 5300

Clinic locations and times are available at [www.shinesa.org.au](http://www.shinesa.org.au)

### Sexual Healthline

Tel 1300 883 793 **Country callers (toll free)** 1800 188 171

Talk to a sexual health nurse about any sexual health issue.

Available 9am – 12.30pm, Monday – Friday

### National Relay Service

[www.relayservice.gov.au](http://www.relayservice.gov.au)

133 677 (TTY/Voice) 1300 555 727 (Speak & Listen) 0423 677 767 (SMS Relay)