

# Contraceptive Implant (Implanon)

- Over 99.95% effective
- Lasts for three years
- No sexually transmitted disease (STI) protection

Implanon - commonly known as the bar or rod - belongs to a group of contraceptive options called Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC). These are the most effective forms of contraception.

Implanon is a four cm-long contraceptive device made out of soft plastic. It is inserted under the skin into the upper arm to prevent pregnancy.

Implanon is impregnated with the hormone etonogestrel, which is a synthetic version of the hormone progesterone that women make naturally. This hormone is slowly released from the bar into the bloodstream.

Implanon does not give you protection from sexually transmitted infections (STIs). The best way to reduce the risk of STIs is to use a barrier method such as condoms.

## How does Implanon work?

Implanon affects ovulation by changing the hormones that cause an egg to be released each month and also thicken the mucus at the neck of the uterus (womb), blocking the sperm.

## Is Implanon right for me?

You may not be able to have an Implanon if you:

- are currently pregnant
- have breast cancer
- have severe liver disease
- have abnormal vaginal bleeding or
- are taking certain medication.

## When can I have Implanon inserted?

- Implanon can be inserted at any time.

- You may need to have a pregnancy test three to four weeks after insertion to check that you weren't already pregnant at the time of insertion.
- It can take seven days to start working as a contraceptive.

## Advantages

- It is the most effective method of contraception.
- Once inserted, you can forget about it for three years.
- There is rapid return to usual fertility (ability to have a baby) once it is removed.
- It is safe to use when breastfeeding.
- Implanon can be taken out at any time by a trained doctor or nurse.
- It may make your period lighter, or less painful or may stop it all together (this is completely safe).
- May help control acne.
- Not affected by infections like gastro.

## Possible side effects

- Bruising and mild soreness at the site of insertion or removal that can last up to two weeks. A small scar will remain.
- Initially users may experience three to five months of frequent and irregular bleeding between periods. Medication is available to help with these symptoms.
- 20% of users will stop having periods completely (this is completely safe).
- Some users may experience acne, breast tenderness, moodiness, increased appetite and headaches.

If you have persistent bleeding, contact Family Planning Tasmania.

## What if Implanon doesn't work?

- If Implanon does not work and you get pregnant, there is no evidence that it will have a negative effect on the pregnancy if you wish to continue with it.
- There are a small number of medications that can stop Implanon from working properly. Your doctor or nurse will be able to advise you of this in detail.

## How is Implanon inserted?

Implanon is inserted via a minor surgical procedure. The procedure is carried out by a trained professional in a health clinic.

At the insertion appointment:

1. local anesthetic is given to numb the skin
2. Implanon is inserted using a special applicator with no stitches required
3. a pressure bandage is applied to reduce the chance of bruising.

## How can I get an Implanon?

You can get an Implanon inserted at Family Planning Tasmania clinics, some GPs, private gynecologists and in public hospitals.

It is safe to have an Implanon inserted as soon as you have a baby.

Implanon insertion at Family Planning Tasmania involves three appointments:

1. Assessment
  - o Discuss the procedure
  - o Check suitability
  - o Do necessary tests
  - o Arrange contraception until Implanon is inserted
2. Insertion
  - o Insert Implanon
3. Follow up
  - o Check Implanon site
  - o Perform pregnancy test

## Do I need a pregnancy test after the procedure?

Implanon can be inserted at any time that pregnancy can be confidently excluded. If pregnancy cannot be excluded, you may need a pregnancy test four weeks after insertion to rule out pregnancy.

## How is an Implanon removed?

- Never attempt to remove an Implanon yourself. Removal should be undertaken by a trained health professional who will remove it by applying a local anesthetic and making a small cut in the skin. Very rarely, one stitch may be required.
- It is important to consider your future contraception needs before you have the Implanon removed as the contraceptive effects cease immediately upon removal.
- Your menstrual cycle will usually return to normal within six weeks of getting Implanon removed. Fertility quickly returns to normal so it is important that you use alternative contraception as soon as the Implanon is removed.

For more information, support & advice visit [www.fpt.asn.au](http://www.fpt.asn.au).

Family Planning Tasmania acknowledges the contribution of Family Planning Victoria and Family Planning New South Wales in the development of this fact sheet.

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