



# Implanon

## PATIENT EDUCATION SERIES

### What is Implanon?

Implanon is a birth control implant which received FDA approval in the US in 2006 although it has been used worldwide for over 10 years. It is a flexible plastic rod about the size of a cardboard matchstick which is inserted just under the skin on the inner side of the upper arm. It contains etonogestrel (a form of progesterone) which is released over a three year period to provide very effective protection against pregnancy. Insertion requires a local anesthetic and only takes a few minutes.

### How does Implanon work?

Implanon works by stopping ovulation, changing the cervical mucus (making it harder for sperm to swim through) and thinning the uterine lining so it is less receptive to implantation.

### How effective is Implanon?

Implanon is one of the most effective methods of birth control. It is 99.9% effective which means that out of every 100 women who use Implanon in one year less than 1 will get pregnant. Implanon may be less effective in women who are overweight. After three years, the effectiveness decreases and the rod should be removed and a new one inserted if desired. Implanon is not protective against sexually transmitted infections.

### What are the advantages of Implanon?

- Implanon is safe and highly effective
- Can be used by women who can't use estrogen-based contraception
- Provides continuous pregnancy protection for 3 years and can be removed anytime during the three year period
- It is effective within 24 hours of implantation
- After removal, a woman's ability to become pregnant returns quickly
- It is a private and discreet birth control method
- Most women cannot see Implanon after insertion (although most can feel it under the skin)
- It is convenient, does not require a daily act to maintain its coverage
- Due to the steady hormone delivery it has fewer hormonal ups and downs than daily birth control methods

### What are the disadvantages of Implanon?

- Irregular and unpredictable bleeding is the most common side effect which can occur during the entire time one uses the implant. For many women periods become fewer and lighter, or stop completely, but other women report having longer heavier periods or an increase in spotting (breakthrough bleeding).

In studies, 1 out of 10 women stopped using Implanon because of bleeding changes.

- 3.6% of clinical study participants experienced implant site complications such as pain, or hematoma, redness or swelling at the time of implantation. Removal complications occurred in 1.7% of study participants and included broken or damaged implant, difficult localization and slight movement. There is a slight risk of scarring from insertion or removal.
- Side effects besides irregular bleeding can include mood swings, weight gain, breast tenderness, headache or acne. Other side effects that have been reported include dizziness, stomach pain, hair loss, painful periods, nervousness, back pain or nausea. Rarely extra hair on body, trouble using contact lenses and spotty darkening of skin has occurred.
- Certain medications may make Implanon less effective so be sure to tell your provider about any medicines you are taking

### What is the cost of Implanon?

The costs associated with Implanon vary from area to area. The cost also depends on insurance and co-pays. In general, the total cost varies from \$500-750, which averages under \$20/mo over the three years. Your health provider can refer you to a facility that can provide Implanon.

### Who can use Implanon?

Implanon is a safe birth control option for most healthy women however it is important to discuss your full medical history with your health provider before using the implant. It is not recommended if you :

- Are pregnant
- Have had breast cancer
- Have unexplained vaginal bleeding
- Have liver disease
- Have a history of severe depression
- Have a history of blood clots
- Are on certain medications such as barbiturates, griseofulvin, rifampin, phenylbutazone, phenytoin, carbamazepine, felbamate, oxcarbazepine, topiramate, modafinil, St. John's wort, anti-HIV protease inhibitors and antipsychotics.

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