

Information about the Contraceptive Implant

The contraceptive implant Nexplanon is a long acting hormonal contraceptive which is inserted under the skin of your arm. It contains Etonogestrel, a progestogen. The implant lasts for 3 years and is 99% effective at preventing pregnancy.

It works by preventing the release of an egg from the ovaries, thickening the cervical mucus to make it difficult for sperm to enter the womb and thins the lining of the womb.

Implant insertion

Prior to the implant insertion, you will have a consultation to determine if it is suitable for you. Some people have a pregnancy test carried out prior to the insertion if there is a risk they might be pregnant on the day of the appointment.

The implant is inserted just under the skin of your arm using local anaesthetic. Paper stitches are applied which are removed after 4-5 days, and a pressure bandage to reduce swelling and bruising is used for 24 hours.

You should be able to feel the implant after insertion. You will be given some information on wound care after your appointment.

If the implant is inserted on day 1-5 of your cycle (day 1 is the first day of your period) then it is effective immediately. If it is inserted at any other time of your cycle, you need to use back up contraception (condoms) or continue with your current method of contraception for 7 days until your implant is effective. The implant is effective for 3 years. The risk of getting pregnant in the 4th year is very low, but you may wish to get it replaced after 3 years or use additional methods of contraception.

Implant removal

For implant removals in this clinic, the implant needs to be palpable. If your implant is not palpable it may have been inserted too deep and you will be referred to a deep implant removal service to be seen by a specialist who is trained in complex implant removals.

Implants are removed under local anaesthetic through a small incision made in the skin. Paper stitches are applied and can be removed after 4-5 days, and a pressure bandage to reduce swelling and bruising is used for 24 hours.

A new implant can be inserted immediately after the old implant is removed using the same incision as long as it is in the correct location.

Once an implant has been removed, the hormone level drops in 7 days and pregnancies have been reported within 14 days of an implant removal. If you need alternative contraception, this can be discussed at your appointment.

You will be given some information on wound care after your appointment.

Risks and complications:

After an insertion or removal, some bruising, pain, swelling and itching may occur. There will be a small scar. Expulsion or migration of the implant after insertion is possible. There is a risk of infection at the wound site- if you experience redness, swelling or discharge from the site, please see your GP as you may have an infection and may need antibiotics.

Advantages of using the implant:

Very reliable- 99% effective at preventing pregnancy.

It can help improve painful periods.

Possible side effects of the implant:

Common- (may affect more than 1 in 10 people)- acne , headache, nausea, breast tenderness, irregular bleeding. 1 in 5 women had no bleeding, 1 in 5 had frequent and/or prolonged bleeding. The bleeding pattern can be unpredictable and change at any time. If you have troublesome bleeding after the implant insertion, around 50% of women find that it improves with time.

Some women have reported mood changes and weight gain with the implant but there is no evidence that these are caused by the implant.

There are other side effects that are listed in your implant information sheet which are not as common.

Do not use Nexplanon

If you are allergic to Etonogestrel

If you have a thrombosis (blood clot)

If you have jaundice or severe liver disease.

If you are pregnant or suspect you may be pregnant.

If you have breast cancer

If you have had a stroke or heart disease.

If you have any unexplained bleeding

More information on the implant can be found on

NHSInform- nhsinform.scot

Sexual Health Scotland- sexualhealthscotland.co.uk

www.nhs.uk