

CONTRACEPTIVE IMPLANT FITTING PATIENT INFORMATION PRIOR TO AN APPOINTMENT

This information is for patients considering an implant as contraception. This is usually a Nexplanon® containing 68mg Etonogestrel in a single, flexible, radio-opaque plastic rod, 4 cm in length and 2 mm in diameter that is inserted just under the surface of the skin in the upper arm.

The implant is a highly effective, long-acting reversible method of contraception. It is licensed for 3 years of use and contains the hormone progestogen.

After fitting you should be able to feel the implant just under the skin, if you can't feel it at any time please book a GP appointment for review

It can be used from the start of periods (menarche) up until 55yrs of age

- ❖ The implant is likely to change your usual bleeding pattern
- ❖ It can help with painful periods.
- ❖ Periods may stop completely (which is safe but just an effect of the hormone and occurs in 1 out of every 4 people using the implant).
- ❖ The bleeding pattern can be unpredictable, often irregular and may change during use.
- ❖ The average number of days of bleeding/spotting with the implant is lower than or comparable to that during natural menstrual cycles or standard use of combined contraception, but the pattern is less predictable
- ❖ If the bleeding pattern isn't acceptable / you are finding it problematic please discuss this with your GP.

HOW IT WORKS: The implant steadily releases the hormone progestogen into your bloodstream, which prevents ovulation (the release of an egg each month). It also thickens the cervical mucus, which makes it more difficult for sperm to move through the cervix, and thins the lining of the womb so a fertilised egg is less likely to implant itself.

The GP that fits or removes contraceptive implants at the practice is Dr Elizabeth Davison.

BENEFITS AND RISKS

Benefits: Fit and forget, a reliable long-term method of contraception.

Providing at least 99% protection from pregnancy for 3years

Risks: Pregnancy as total protection not guaranteed but reported as <1 in 1000 women

Irregular bleeding especially in the first year. Hormonal side effects such as headaches, acne and breast tenderness, weight gain, bloating and mood change. Infection at site. Difficulty removing the implant.

TIMING OF IMPLANT FIT APPOINTMENT

- ❖ Before an implant can be fitted it is important that there is no chance you are pregnant. If there is doubt, fitting may be postponed.
- ❖ Continue regular, effective contraception up until your implant fitting. (You may need to continue for a further 7 days after depending on timing.) Consider a GP phone appointment to discuss contraception until then if not already using this. Take especial care with condoms or consider abstaining from sexual intercourse from your last period.
- ❖ The ideal time to fit an implant is the first 5 days of a natural period (Or by day 5 after a termination or by day 21 after childbirth without the need for additional contraception)
- ❖ It can sometimes be fitted at other times if we are sure you aren't pregnant (eg: if you are using another method reliably) but then additional contraception will need to be continued for 7days after fitting a follow-up pregnancy test needs to be taken.
- ❖ If you don't have periods at present (eg during breastfeeding or whilst using other methods of contraception), an implant fit can be arranged at any time providing there is no chance of pregnancy. In some circumstances a negative pregnancy test may be needed before an implant can be fitted. To rely on a negative result, effective contraception or abstinence from sex is required for the 3 weeks before the pregnancy test.

WHO CAN'T USE A CONTRACEPTIVE

- ❖ Patients with active Breast cancer, arterial thromboembolism, decompensated cirrhosis, hepatocellular tumours and unexplained vaginal bleeding are unsuitable to have the contraceptive implant, if you have any concerns please discuss with your GP
- ❖ Some medications interfere with the effectiveness of the contraceptive implant – these include one type of emergency contraception* and medications known as 'enzyme-inducers'**
- ❖ If you are unsure, please book a telephone appointment ahead of booking the implant insertion appointment to make sure it's the right contraception/ right time to be fitted.

** Individuals should be advised to wait 5 days after taking the emergency contraceptive (UPA-EC, also known as 'Ella-One' before insertion of the contraceptive implant. They should be made aware that they must use condoms reliably or abstain from sex during the 5 days waiting and then for 7 days after implant insertion*

*** Individuals using enzyme-inducing drugs should be informed that the contraceptive effectiveness of the contraceptive implant could be reduced during use of the enzyme-inducer and for 28 days after stopping the enzyme-inducer.*

THE FITTING PROCESS:

- ❖ Please allow up to an hour for the appointment, to allow for delays.
- ❖ The doctor will ask questions to check the implant is suitable for you. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions, before giving your consent to proceed with the fitting. Remember, you can change your mind about having an implant fitted at any time
- ❖ The process of fitting an implant involves the following steps. You will be invited to lie down on the couch with your non-dominant arm exposed (short sleeved top), the skin will be cleaned and you will be given an injection of local anaesthetic to numb a small area on the inner aspect of your upper arm. Once this has had time to take effect, the implant will be inserted just under the skin but you won't feel any pain. You will be invited to feel the implant with your other hand so you are aware of where it is. Then Steri-Strips (paper sutures-no actual stitches are used) will be applied and a gauze dressing held in place by a bandage will be applied.
- ❖ **Please note: This dressing needs to stay in place and dry for 4-5days after fitting to allow for healing.**
- ❖ **This means no swimming for 4-5days after the fitting and when washing you will need to keep your arm out of the shower/bath and covered using a plastic bag or cling film.**
- ❖ Your arm may feel a little sore after fitting and you should avoid heavy lifting with that arm You may have a small bruise on your arm but this should settle within a few days
- ❖ If you have pain or any redness around the site please see a GP for review as it could be a sign of infection

IMPLANT REPLACEMENT:

- ❖ The old implant can be removed and a new one inserted at the same appointment
- ❖ If you are attending for a replacement implant and your implant change is overdue, you are advised to use an additional form of contraception eg condoms. In some cases, a negative pregnancy test after at least 3 weeks of contraception/abstinence, may be required before the implant can be changed.

BEFORE THE FITTING:

- ❖ Please wear short sleeved clothing so we can access the top half of your arm to fit the implant. If you have a needle phobia it may not be the ideal contraceptive option for you, please discuss this in an appointment before booking a fitting if you have any concerns.

IMPLANT REMOVAL:

- ❖ It is similar to insertion but can take a little longer. You will be invited to lie down on the couch with your arm exposed (short sleeved top), the skin will be cleaned and you will be given an injection of local anaesthetic to numb a small area on the inner aspect of your upper arm. Once this has had time to take effect a small cut will be made over the implant but you won't feel any pain due to the local anaesthetic. You will just feel some pressure on the other end of the implant to stabilise it & allow for the end to be located and removed. The implant is a little bendy/can move and can have some tissue around it so it can take a little bit of time to remove. Once removed you will have the same dressing as insertion.
- ❖ **Please keep the dressing/bandage on and dry for 4-5days after removal to allow healing.**
- ❖ If you still need contraception after implant removal, it may be worth starting your new method a week before the removal so you don't lose any contraceptive cover, do discuss this with a GP before booking a removal
- ❖ If you are planning a pregnancy after removal, please note you can become pregnant within 2 weeks of removal but sometimes ovulation doesn't occur until 6weeks after removal
- ❖ If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to ask