



What is the birth control implant?

The implant is a small flexible rod that is inserted just under the skin of your upper arm. It is about the size of a matchstick. The implant contains the hormone progestin (etonogestrel). It does not contain estrogen. It can stay in place for up to three years and can be removed at any time by a health care provider.

It is not visible through the skin, but you can feel it with your fingers to make sure it is in place.

How does the implant work?

- » The implant prevents pregnancy by stopping ovulation (releasing an egg).
- » The hormone also thickens cervical fluid to block sperm from reaching the uterus.
- » It prevents pregnancy 99% of the time.
- » **The implant provides effective pregnancy prevention one week after insertion. Continue to use your previous birth control method for one week.**

What is it like to get an implant inserted?

The practitioner will inject a small amount of local anesthetic (freezing) in your skin of the inside of your upper arm. You will feel the needle. They will then insert the rod. There may be some bruising after the procedure.

The timing of insertion is important. You may be asked to take a pregnancy test before your provider inserts the implant. They may schedule the insertion at a specific point in your menstrual cycle.

Where can I get the birth control implant?

The implant was approved for use in Canada in May 2020. You will need to see a health care provider for a prescription and to make sure the implant is safe for you to use.

The implant is currently available at the following clinics to be inserted by a qualified healthcare provider:

- » Women's Health Clinic is in the process of training providers to do insertions.
- » Women's Hospital - Health Sciences Centre (Women's Outpatient Department through self-referral)
- » Other sites may offer this service. Contact your healthcare provider for more information.

To determine financial coverage, contact your third-party insurer. Clients with no coverage will need to cover the cost of the prescription.

Does the implant protect me from STIs or HIV?

No. Using safer sex supplies during sex (IE condoms or oral sex dams) reduces the risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection (STI) or HIV.

Get tested regularly for STIs and HIV.

Are there side effects?

Unpredictable bleeding, including spotting, prolonged bleeding, or no bleeding, is common during your first year on the implant. This often improves over time. Some people will stop getting a period while they are on the implant.

Some users may experience mild side effects such as headaches, weight gain, acne, breast tenderness, mood changes, and decreased interest in sex. These may improve after the first few months of use.

Serious side effects are rare, but include infection at the implant site or the implant moving from its original place.

Seek medical attention if you have:

- » signs of pregnancy
- » heavy bleeding
- » depression
- » severe lower abdominal pain
- » prolonged pain, redness, itching or bleeding at the implant site
- » or if you cannot feel the implant under your skin

What else do I need to know?

The implant contains a small amount of barium sulfate, so it can be seen in X-rays.

You can use the implant while breastfeeding.

What do I do if I want my implant taken out?

You must see a health care provider. Do not try to remove the implant yourself.

Once the implant is removed, you may become pregnant right away.