

CONTRACEPTIVE IMPLANT

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The implant is a small plastic rod which is inserted just under the skin in the arm of the woman. It can remain there for up to 3 years slowly releasing the hormone that prevents pregnancy. A specialist nurse or doctor must fit this.

AVAILABILITY	60
EASE OF USE	90
PREGNANCY PROTECTION	99.95
YEARS IN USE	18
STI PROTECTION	0

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You might have heard in the news in the last few days that some women have got pregnant over the last few years after using the Contraceptive Implant (also known until recently as Implanon). So this is to re-assure you about how effective it is and what you should do if you are concerned.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Well as my 'Sexy Trump' card shows the Implant is super effective. No method of contraception is 100%, but this one is pretty close. It is inserted under the skin under the arm at a clinic, by a specially trained nurse. It's done under local anaesthetic which numbs the arm, a small incision is made and the implant is inserted.

The implant can stay in for up to 3 years. It slowly releases an extra amount of progestogen (a hormone which naturally occurs in females), which prevents pregnancy by preventing the womb lining from being created and by preventing sperm getting past the cervix. It is highly effective (more on this in a sec).

Some women love this method of contraception and others aren't so keen (there is a progestogen pill which has a similar effect and can be taken before trying out the implant). Once in you don't have to remember to do anything or take anything, it sits in the arm doing it's job for up to 3 years.

However it doesn't prevent STIs, so you may want to use condoms too.

Like all hormonal contraception, it can have some side effects for some women and these side effects can vary from woman to woman. Just because your Aunty got moody and spots on the Implant doesn't mean that you will: ok?

It stays in for up to 3 years but can be taken out before then by your clinic if you want. It works as soon as it's put in and you can get pregnant soon after it being taken out.

SO WHAT'S THIS I'M HEARING IN THE NEWS?

I'm afraid that many journalists aren't that great at reporting about contraception and sex. Some journalists have said that 584 women got pregnant using the Implant, this might be true. However they don't tell you that the number of women that have used the Implant in the UK is between 800,000 and 1.4 million.

This means that the Implant is still way over 99% effective. Also many of these women may have been pregnant before the Implant was fitted or had their Implant fitted incorrectly.

So the Implant is very very effective. Ok? If you are concerned about the very small risk of pregnancy from the Implant (much less than 1%, possibly as low as 0.5%) then as well as being on the Implant you could use condoms too and/or avoid penis in vagina sex or avoid ejaculation inside the vagina.

If you are concerned and you've had the implant fitted then you can go back to the clinic or GP where you got it and chat to a nurse. The advice from the experts is: if you can feel it, it's fine.

For more go to brook.org.uk or fpa.org.uk