

## **Contraceptive Implant (Nexplanon®) Fact Sheet**

The contraceptive implant is a matchstick-sized, thin, flexible plastic rod inserted under the skin of your arm by your healthcare provider. It can prevent pregnancy for up to three years. The implant works to prevent pregnancy by continuously releasing a small amount of hormone called etonogestrel. Etonogestrel is a type of progestin hormone, which all women have naturally. This hormone prevents the egg from being released from the ovary, and it thickens cervical mucous to prevent sperm from reaching an egg. The implant is more than 99% effective, and it is one of the most effective forms of contraception (more effective than having your tubes tied).

**The implant does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs).** Condoms are the best way for sexually active people to reduce the risk of infection. Always use a condom if you or your partner has other sex partners or if you are otherwise at risk of STIs.

### **Insertion of the Implant:**

The implant is inserted by your healthcare provider in the office. An area on your upper, inner arm will be cleansed and the area will be injected with a numbing medicine (lidocaine). The implant will be inserted just under the skin of your arm. Both you and your healthcare provider should be able to feel the implant after insertion.

### **Removal of the Implant:**

The implant is removed in your healthcare provider's office. Your provider will feel for the location of the rod. After injecting the area with numbing medicine (lidocaine), a tiny incision will be made over the end of the implant and the implant will be removed by pushing it out of the tiny incision. Very rarely, if your healthcare provider cannot feel the rod, you may need to have imaging tests (ultrasound or MRI) to locate the implant before it can be removed.

### **Advantages of the Implant:**

- Nothing to do right before sex to prevent pregnancy
- Most effective form of birth control
- Can be used immediately after pregnancy
- Decreases the total amount of menstrual bleeding each month
- Can quickly become pregnant when implant is removed
- May decrease risk of uterine (endometrial), ovarian, colon, and other cancers

### **Possible Disadvantages of the Implant:**

- Most women have some irregular menstrual bleeding or spotting when first using the implant. Some women will continue to have irregular bleeding or spotting the entire time they use the implant. Some women may stop having menstrual periods completely.
- Uncommonly, women may notice acne or breast tenderness when first starting to use the implant.
- The implant may interact with certain epilepsy (anti-seizure), anti-retroviral, and other medications.

### **Risks of using the Implant:**

- Rarely, a woman may get an infection or scarring at the site of implant insertion/removal.
- Very rarely, an implant may move slightly within the arm (especially if the woman gains or loses a lot of weight), which may make it more difficult to remove.

**Contraindications – the Implant is generally not recommended for women who:**

- Have an allergy to the hormone etonogestrel
- Have a recent history of breast cancer
- Would be bothered by not knowing when she is going to have light bleeding or spotting while using the implant

Tell your clinician if you have any of these risk factors or conditions.

**Warning Signs – please call your healthcare provider right away if you:**

- Notice redness, swelling, or unusual pain at the insertion site
- Are concerned about new symptoms that might be related to the implant

**Instructions after Insertion:**

- Leave the Band-Aid or tape covering the insertion/removal site for 2-3 days
- You may remove the arm wrap/pressure bandage (used to decrease bruising) 24 hours after insertion
- Bruising and mild discomfort are common after insertion/removal
- If you are bothered by unpredictable bleeding, you are generally advised to wait 3-4 months to see if the bleeding pattern continues. If you continue to be bothered by your bleeding pattern, call your provider's office to discuss your options.

Regular visits for routine health care, STI and cancer screening are strongly recommended.