



Implanon

What is Implanon? Implanon is a new injectable progesterone-only *subdermal implant* contraceptive system. It consists of a single soft polymer rod about the size of a matchstick which is injected under the skin of the inside upper arm under local anesthesia by a medical practitioner.

What are the advantages of Implanon? Once the implant is inserted, it usually requires no further care and will prevent pregnancy for up to three years. Implanon contains only a progesterone hormone, and women who cannot take estrogen can often use Implanon safely.

How does it work? Implanon releases a continuous small amount of a synthetic progesterone hormone (etonogestrel) under the skin. Progesterone prevents pregnancy by causing the cervical mucus to become thick so that sperm cannot penetrate and by preventing ovulation. Implanon should be removed after no more than three years and a new implant may be inserted to continue using the method if desired.

How well does Implanon prevent pregnancy? Studies have demonstrated that less than 1 out of 100 women will become pregnant with this method each year. The pregnancy rate with Implanon is slightly better than oral contraceptives and about the same as the IUD.

Is Implanon safe? This contraceptive method has been used by more than 2.5 million women in over 30 countries since 1998. Progesterone-only contraceptives have been used widely and are considered safe for most women.

What are the side effects of Implanon? Implanon may cause irregular bleeding or spotting and periods may sometimes stop altogether. Implant site complications such as redness, swelling, or pain may occur in a small percentage of women. Other side effects in a small number of women can include mood swings, headaches, acne, and depression.

Are there any serious risks with Implanon? A small number of women (1-2%) who use Implanon will have insertion or removal complications. These can include bleeding, pain, scarring, infection, or need for minor surgery in a hospital to remove the implant.

Who should not use Implanon? Implanon is generally not recommended for use in women who have liver disease or liver tumors, breast cancer, undiagnosed irregular vaginal bleeding, or known or suspected pregnancy. Although Implanon is not specifically recommended for women who have had blood clots in their veins (deep vein thrombosis or DVT), progesterone-only hormonal methods are considered safer than contraceptive methods which contain estrogen for women with a history of these problems.