

# The Implant (Nexplanon®): Common Questions and Answers

## **What is the implant and how is it inserted?**

The implant (Nexplanon®) is a small, soft and flexible birth control implant, just 4 centimeters in length. A health care provider inserts the implant into the skin of the upper arm. The implant has been proven-through research and FDA approval to be a safe method of birth control.

## **How effective is the implant?**

It provides protection against pregnancy for 3 years and is more than 99 percent effective. The implant does not protect against HIV infection or other sexually transmitted diseases.

## **What are the side effects of the implant?**

The most common side effect of the implant is a change in normal menstrual bleeding patterns. Additional side effects include mood swings, weight gain, headaches and/or acne. All of the possible side effects are discussed at the time of placement.

## **Why do side effects happen?**

Each birth control method has a risk for side effects. When you introduce hormones into your body, it can take a few months to adjust. If side effects don't improve after six months, you should talk with your health care provider.

## **Why would an implant be removed?**

After 3 years, the implant is no longer more than 99 percent effective at preventing a pregnancy. A health care provider can remove the implant and place a new one into the skin of the upper arm. Some patients choose to remove the implant prior to 3 years due to one or more of the following reasons:

- Irregular or heavy menstrual bleeding: Every woman's body responds differently to the hormones in the implant. Some women have lighter or no periods, while others have excessive bleeding for a longer period of time. Irregular vaginal bleeding is normal but if it becomes a problem, patients can have implant removed.
- Weight gain: This side effect occurs in less than 6 percent of women, but can be a reason for removal. Weight gain can be prevented by a healthy diet and exercise.
- Arm pain: Pain can occur any time within the three years after placement.
- Interest in another method of contraception
- Desire to get pregnant

## **What is the removal procedure like?**

The procedure is quick and safe:

1. A health care provider locates and marks the exact position of the implant.
2. The arm is cleaned to prevent infection. Numbing medication is injected in the area of removal. This numbing medicine may burn slightly while going into the skin.
3. Once the skin is numb, the health care provider makes a small incision at the tip of the implant and removes it. You may feel the health care provider touching your arm, but you should not feel anything sharp or painful during the removal.

## **What happens after it is removed?**

You will need to wear a bandage for 48 hours. The area of removal should also remain dry for 24 hours. It is common and normal to experience some bruising and soreness for about one week after removal.

## **When should I start taking another form of birth control after the implant is removed?**

If you do not want to get pregnant after removal, it's vital to start another form of birth control prior to removal or immediately afterward. You may become pregnant as early as the first week after removal. Talk to your health care provider about another birth control method before the implant is removed.

If you have any questions about the implant or any other form of contraception, please talk to your health care provider, visit [NationwideChildrens.org/BC4Teens](http://NationwideChildrens.org/BC4Teens) or call (614) 722-6200 to schedule an appointment at BC4Teens.

