

## What are the advantages?

- Long acting – once inserted it will be effective for several years.
- Easy to use – there is nothing to do or remember once it has been inserted.
- Effective – it is extremely effective as a contraceptive.
- Return to fertility – rapid return once it is removed.

## What are the disadvantages?

- Irregular bleeding, or periods that last longer. This is quite common especially in the first 6 months and may last for the whole 5 years. While it can be annoying, it is not harmful and does not mean the implant is less effective. There are treatments to control irregular bleeding so ask Family Planning or your health professional about it if this is a problem for you.
- No bleeding – periods stop for some women. This is safe for your body.
- Wound problem – you may have bruising. Occasionally there can be soreness or infection.
- Insertion and removal – needs to be done by a trained health practitioner.
- Difficulty in removing implant – occasionally the implant cannot be easily felt under the skin and you may need to be referred to someone else to remove it.
- The research does NOT show that implants cause any change in weight, mood, headaches or libido.

## Does it protect you from sexually transmissible infections (STIs)?

**No**, you need to use condoms (and lubricant) as well to protect against STIs.

# Contraceptive Implant



Family Planning provides confidential and non-judgemental sexual and reproductive health and education services. For more information about Family Planning resources, clinics and health promotion services, go to our website [familyplanning.org.nz](http://familyplanning.org.nz)

## What is it?

Contraceptive implants are small rods about the size of a matchstick which are put under the skin in the inside of your arm. You can feel them under the skin. They slowly release a hormone called progesterone. Implants last either 3 or 5 years depending on which one you have.

These implants are effective as contraception but are not useful for women who are trying to control painful periods or bleeding problems.



## How do they work?

Implants can stop the body from releasing an egg each month. They also thicken the mucus in the cervix so that sperm cannot travel up to meet an egg.

## How well does it work?

Implants are more than 99% effective in preventing pregnancy (this means that only a few women out of a thousand will get pregnant each year).

## What will I notice?

Your periods may change. Some women have their normal periods, a few have no periods and many have a change in bleeding pattern. This may be infrequent bleeding, frequent bleeding, light bleeding or heavy bleeding. This is safe for your body, and there are pills to treat this if it happens. Research has shown that about one woman in every seven has the implant removed because of bleeding problems.

## Becoming pregnant after removal

Your natural fertility will return as soon as you have the implant removed.

If you get pregnant with the implant in place, and decide to continue with your pregnancy, the chance of having an abnormal baby is not increased. You will need to have the implant removed.

## How is it put in and taken out?

You need to see someone who is trained to insert and remove implants. A local injection is used to numb the area. The rods are placed under the skin and steristrips are used to hold the skin together until the skin heals. It is removed in the same way. You will have a small scar from each procedure.

## Who can use it?

Almost every woman can use it whatever her age. It is suitable for women who may forget pills, injection appointments or who may have a medical reason that stops them using the combined pill.

## Who should not use it?

- women who have had breast cancer
- women who are taking some medications - check with your doctor if you are taking regular medication.