



Rose Clinic Bray

Contraceptive Implant Insertion

The contraceptive implant available in Ireland is called the Implanon NXT.

Please remember to bring the device with you.

What is a contraceptive implant?

The contraceptive implant is a small 4cm long plastic rod that sits under the skin in the upper arm. It releases a small amount of a progesterone (etonogestrel) steadily over three years to prevent pregnancy.

This stops the ovaries ovulating and thickens the mucus at the cervix which makes it more difficult for sperm to enter the womb. This is a very effective method of contraception. After one year of use, only 1 in 2,000 women will become pregnant using this method. The contraceptive implant does not offer any protection against sexually transmitted infections.

The contraceptive implant is suitable for most women. However for a small number it may not be suitable. The doctor will discuss your medical history with you to ensure that it is suitable.

You should also let the doctor know if you are using any prescription or over the counter medications, particularly if you are on medication for epilepsy or HIV infection. A small number of medications may interfere with the hormone (etonogestrel) in the contraceptive implant.

****Please Note: It is not possible to insert an Implanon if there is any possibility that you may be pregnant.**

We ask that you arrange your implant insertion for within 5 days of the start of your normal period or that you avoid unprotected sexual intercourse from the start of your last normal period. If you are using hormonal contraception, you may be able to have your implant fitted outside of this time period. Your doctor will discuss this with you if appropriate. Your doctor may do a pregnancy test (using a urine sample) prior to your procedure.**



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How is the contraceptive implant fitted?

The contraceptive implant is inserted under the skin in the upper arm. A small amount of local anaesthetic is first injected into the skin to numb the area. You should let the doctor know if you have ever had an allergic reaction to a local anaesthetic in the past. A few minutes later the implant is injected under the skin. Both you and the doctor inserting the implant will check that you can feel the implant in your arm after insertion. After this, a dressing will be applied. The procedure takes 5 to 10 minutes in total. You may require additional contraceptive precautions for one week after your implant insertion. Your doctor will discuss this with you on the day of your appointment.

How is the contraceptive implant removed?

Your contraceptive implant needs to be removed after three years or it may no longer be effective at preventing pregnancy. It is removed by your doctor who will numb the skin over the implant with a local anaesthetic. They will then make a small cut with a scalpel and carefully remove the implant. This procedure takes approximately ten minutes. If you wish to have a new implant inserted, it can then be inserted through the same incision. It is your responsibility to contact your doctor when your implant is due for removal or replacement. Failure to do so may result in a risk of unintended pregnancy

Wound Care Following Insertion or Removal

If you have a compression bandage, you can remove this after 24 hours. You should keep a clean, dry, adhesive dressing on your wound for 3-5 days. If the dressing becomes wet or soiled before this, replace it with a clean, dry dressing. After this the dressing can be removed. Paper stitches should be allowed to fall off naturally over the following number of days.



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What are the side-effects or risks of the implant?

- Changes in vaginal bleeding

Your pattern of vaginal bleeding may change. 1 in 5 will have no periods at all. 3 in 5 will bleed irregularly but this is usually not frequent or heavy. The remaining 1 in 5 may bleed frequently, heavily or for longer. If this goes on for more than three months after the implant is inserted, you should contact the clinic for further advice.

- Progestogenic side-effects

Some women are more prone to side-effects with hormonal contraception. Common hormone related side-effects include breast tenderness, bloating, headaches, acne, or mood changes. Contact the clinic if these are persistent or severe.

- Movement of the implant

The implant is inserted under the skin. With the newer insertion devices, deep insertion into the muscle is rare. After insertion, you should always be able to feel the implant in your arm. If at any stage you are unable to feel the implant, contact your doctor. If they are also unable to feel the device, they will arrange an ultrasound to see where it is. Occasionally the device may need to be removed in hospital surgically.

- Bruising/Bleeding

Mild bruising or bleeding is common after insertion of the contraceptive implant. This resolves within 1–2 weeks.

- Infection

As with any surgical procedure, there is a small risk of infection. If you have any concerns about this (redness around the wound, discharge from the wound, fever) please contact the clinic.

- Scarring

Insertion of the contraceptive implant results in a very tiny scar on the upper inner arm. When the device is removed, this will result in an additional small scar at a nearby location.

- Breakage

Occasionally the contraceptive implant may break into two or more pieces. If you are concerned this may have happened, you should notify the clinic. Your implant may require more than one small incision to remove all the pieces safely.