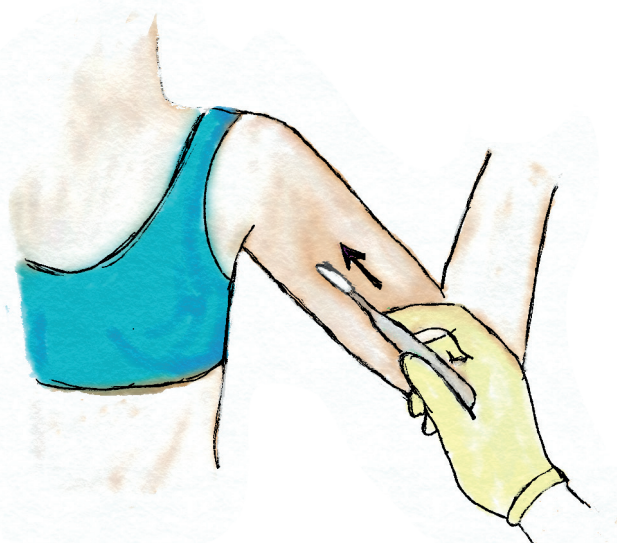


# Contraceptive Implant

## What is it and what is it for?

It is a small flexible plastic rod that is 2 cm long. It is placed under the skin in your upper arm and it steadily releases a single type of hormone (progestin) to prevent pregnancy. Its effect lasts between 3 and 5 years, according to the type of implant.



It prevents pregnancy by interrupting the menstrual cycle. It usually makes you stop menstruating or your periods become lighter. This is why it is also used to regulate very heavy periods or to prevent the bleeding caused by uterine polyps called fibroids.

## What is it not for?

It does not protect you from catching sexually transmitted diseases and it is not a method of abortion or of interrupting pregnancy. Nor does it stop you from getting pregnant if you have the injection after having unprotected sex.

## Can anyone use it?

It is not recommended for women with diseases that affect their blood circulation (lupus, high blood pressure, diabetes...) or a liver disease.

## What side effects does it have?

It reduces bone density and so increases the risk of getting osteoporosis. It also makes it more difficult to get pregnant in the months after you have the implant removed.

Although it normally makes you stop menstruating, for the first 3 months you may still have irregular periods. You may experience liquid retention, weight gain, headaches, mood swings or irritability, and stomach upsets. Although it is unusual, this medication can make your blood thicker and encourage the appearance of blood clots in the veins (thrombosis), as is the case with all hormonal methods of contraception. This is more frequent in patients who are smokers or whose legs have been immobilized due to long-distance journeys, wearing bandages or plaster, etc.

## When can you have it fitted?

It should be fitted between the 1st and 5th day of your period.

You should use contraceptive pills before using this long-acting method.

## When should it be replaced?

If you are fitted with a single-rod implant (containing 68 mg of progestin), it should be replaced after 3 years. If you are fitted with a two-rod implant (75 mg each), it should be replaced after 5 years, except in women that weigh over 80 kg. In this case, it should be replaced during the 4th year, as it becomes less effective after this time.

## What happens if I forget to have it replaced?

It becomes less effective as a method of contraception and the risk of getting pregnant increases. You should use condoms for the first 7 days after having the new implant.

## How long can you use this method?

You can use it until the menopause, when your periods stop.