

The contraceptive implant: Nexplanon

What is Nexplanon?

Nexplanon is a contraceptive hormonal implant and is a long-acting, reversible birth control method (LARC). A health care provider inserts the implant (a small rod about the size of a matchstick) into the skin of the underside of the upper arm after local anesthetic is used to numb the area — the procedure takes about one minute. It is designed so that it isn't easily visible, but can be felt just underneath the skin. Tissue forms around the rod after insertion, holding it in place. It is effective at preventing pregnancy for up to three years and does not require daily maintenance by the user. Removal and/or replacement of the device requires another visit to a health care provider. With the use of a local anesthetic, a small incision is made in the skin near the tip of the rod to remove it. Ovulation can occur within five days once the rod is removed, so a back-up birth control method, like condoms, may be used. Fertility typically returns to normal within one month.

How effective is the method?

The contraceptive implant is over 99 percent effective at preventing pregnancy. The device is administered by a health care provider, which reduces the risk of user error.

What side effects might I experience while using this method?

The most commonly reported side effect is changes in menstrual bleeding patterns (e.g., longer or shorter periods, time between periods may vary, spotting between periods). Other possible side effects include mood swings, weight gain, headache, and acne—all of which can impact whether or not a person chooses to continue using the method. Some users may experience slight swelling at the site of insertion. There's also a possibility of a small scar once removed.

How can I obtain Nexplanon?

Medical Services does not offer Nexplanon insertions; you may get a referral from Medical Services to Planned Parenthood or another gynecological clinic for a Nexplanon insertion.

Cost

Fees vary. Students should check with their health insurance plan if they wish to use their coverage to get Nexplanon.

What else do I need to know before deciding to use Nexplanon?

The device is currently only available in one formulation and dosage. As such, individuals who are at 135 percent of their recommended body mass index (BMI) may not receive enough of the hormones relative to their body size to prevent pregnancy. The implant is also not recommended for those with a hormone-dependent cancer, active thrombosis, or severe liver disease.

On-Campus & Online Resources

[Medical Services](#): (212) 854-2284
Clinician on call: (212) 854-7426

[Gay Health Advocacy Project/Women's Health Advocacy Project](#): (212) 854-6655

[Go Ask Alice!](#), a part of Alice! Health Promotion

