

**What is the birth control implant?**

The implant is a device that is inserted just under the skin of your upper arm. The implant can stay in place for up to 3 years and can be removed at any time by a health care provider. It is about the size of a matchstick and contains the hormone progestin. It primarily prevents pregnancy by stopping ovulation (releasing an egg) and also thickens the cervical fluid to block sperm from reaching the uterus.

**How effective is the birth control implant?**

The implant is one of the most effective, reversible methods of birth control. The implant is over 99% effective at preventing pregnancy, which means that less than 1 out of 100 people who use it as their only form of birth control will get pregnant in 1 year.

**How do I get the birth control implant?**

You can visit a clinic to talk with a healthcare provider about whether the implant is right for you. A trained healthcare provider can insert the implant; the healthcare provider who inserted the implant can also do the removal. Some Options clinics may provide these services. To find a health care provider who does implant insertions and removals near you, please contact Sex Sense.

Advantages of the birth control implant	Disadvantages of the birth control implant
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The implant stays in place – there is no need to remember to do anything</li> <li>• Does not affect your ability to get pregnant in the future – once removed your fertility quickly returns</li> <li>• The implant is private/discreet (although some people may be able to feel it under the skin)</li> <li>• You have complete control over the method and no one can interfere with its effectiveness</li> <li>• A good choice for people who cannot use estrogen</li> <li>• Improved menstrual symptoms for some users (periods may become lighter, less period cramping)</li> <li>• Decreased symptoms of Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)</li> <li>• Once removed any side effects go away quickly</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Depending on where you live it may be harder to find a qualified health care provider to insert the implant</li> <li>• Unpredictable bleeding is common especially during the first year of use, including spotting, prolonged bleeding or no bleeding. This often improves over time</li> <li>• Some users may experience mild side effects such as headaches, weight gain, acne (although for some acne gets better with this method), breast tenderness, mood changes, and decreased interest in sex (these may improve after the first few months of use)</li> <li>• The implant does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)</li> <li>• It must be removed by a qualified health care provider</li> <li>• Rare and manageable complications may include infection at the site of the implant or the implant moving from its original place</li> </ul>

## When do I get the implant inserted?

You can get the implant inserted at any time in your menstrual cycle. The implant is effective in preventing pregnancy after one week of use, so you need to use a backup method of birth control such as condoms, or not have sex for 7 days.

Seek medical attention immediately if you have any of the following symptoms, as they could indicate a serious complication:

- Signs of pregnancy
- Heavy bleeding
- Depression
- Severe, lower abdominal pain (may be a sign of pregnancy)
- Pus, prolonged pain, redness, itching or bleeding at the implant site (may be a sign of infection)
- If you cannot feel the implant under your skin

Some medications and over-the counter herbal supplements may interact with or decrease the effectiveness of birth control. Be sure to mention that you are using birth control to your health care provider or pharmacist.

### **Questions? We're here for you!**

We know it can be confusing to choose and use a method. We are here to help.

You can visit one of our Options for Sexual Health Clinics to speak with a health care provider. Our Sex Sense Team is available Monday-Friday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. by phone 1-800-739-7367 or by email at [SexSense.org](http://SexSense.org) to answer your questions about birth control, or any other questions about sex, sexuality, or sexual health. This fact sheet contains general information and should not be used in place of individual consultation with a qualified healthcare provider.