

Sub-dermal Implant

Your guide to the insertion and removal of the implant

Can I do anything before I come for my appointment?

It will help us if you wear a sleeveless top, t-shirt, or blouse. The implant can be fitted at any time during your menstrual cycle if there is no risk of pregnancy (i.e., you are using a method of contraception reliably, or have not had intercourse since your last period).

What will happen at my appointment?

Your appointment will last about 20 minutes, and you will see a doctor. The appointment may be longer in some circumstances (e.g., if the implant is being changed for a new one, needs a change of position, has moved or is lying deeper than normal). The doctor will check information about your use of contraception and period dates, to make sure there are no new concerns or risks since you were last seen. The doctor will also answer any further questions you may have about the procedure.

How is the implant put in?

You will be asked to lie flat on a clinic bed and will be given an injection of local anaesthetic (like the dentist uses) or freezing spray to numb your skin. This will be in the upper arm you do not use for writing (non-dominant) slightly to the back of your arm. If you have had several (three or more) implants, we may change the arm we insert it in. This may hurt initially but will soon wear off. The implant is put in just under the surface of your skin into the numb area.

What happens after the implant is put in?

It is important that you are aware of where the implant has been fitted, and you will be shown where to feel it under your skin. You will have a bandage which has to remain on for 24 hours and a dressing which must be kept on for 3 days, and then it can be removed. The area may be slightly swollen after the procedure due to the anaesthetic used, this settles after about an hour. The area may be sore; this can be relieved by simple painkillers, such as Paracetamol, if you feel you need it. It is normal to get some bruising around the implant after the procedure – some people bruise more than others. This usually settles within one week and is more likely if you are having the implant changed. Please try not to lift any heavy objects, e.g., gym weights, for 24 hours after the implant is fitted.

You may be advised to use condoms for the first seven days after you have had the implant inserted or to have no sexual intercourse. The doctor will tell you about this.

It can take up to 3 months for your menstrual bleeding pattern (“periods”) to settle down, please call for some pills which may help settle the bleeding if it troubles you. You will be given a card to remind you when the implant needs changing. Please keep this card safe.

How long does the implant last?

It lasts for three years. When it is due to be changed, please contact the surgery at least one month before the change is due.

What about having the implant taken out?

You can have the implant out at any time but call the GP or nurse to discuss your other options for contraception first. The removal procedure for taking the implant out is like having it inserted: local anaesthetic or freezing spray is used, and the doctor will make a very small nick at one end of the skin near your implant to remove it.

What happens after it is taken out?

Some 'paper stitches' will be used (these don't need a needle) and a dressing applied over the area where your implant used to be. The dressing will need to stay on for 5 days and the paper stitches for up to seven days. Once you have taken the dressing off you can shower and wash as normal.

If you do not want to become pregnant you will need to use another form of contraception. This can be given by the doctor or nurse.

Do I have to come back to surgery?

You do not need to come back to the surgery unless you have any problems or worries.

Can I have another implant fitted?

It is fine to have another implant fitted at the same time as having your old one taken out. As this is an extra procedure it produces more bruising. The implant may also have to be placed in the other arm or its position changed.

Please keep this information safe in case you need to refer to it.

Further Information

If you would like to discuss the Implant with a GP or have any further questions, please ring Reception, and request a contraception counselling appointment. This will be a telephone appointment with a female GP.

Alternatively, you can visit the NHS website and read about Implants by clicking on the link below.

[Contraceptive implant - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)