CHILWELL VALLEY AND MEADOWS PRACTICE

INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS HAVING A CONTRACEPTIVE IMPLANT FITTED

AT THE VALLEY AND CHILWELL MEADOWS PRACTICE

Please read this leaflet together with the appropriate family planning association information for the implant

[Your Guide to the Contraceptive Implant - Family Planning Association (fpa.org.uk)](https://www.fpa.org.uk/download/your-guide-to-the-contraceptive-implant/)

This leaflet is for women who have decided on an implant (Nexplanon) and need more detailed information about what to expect.

**What is Nexplanon?**

Nexplanon is a small, flexible tube, about the size of a small matchstick. It is placed just under the skin of your inner upper arm, and it steadily releases a small dose of the hormone progestogen into your bloodstream. It works for three years.

**How does Nexplanon work?**

Nexplanon works in three ways:

• It stops your ovaries releasing an egg every month.

• It thickens the mucus produced from your cervix. This makes it more difficult for the sperm to get to the egg.

• It thins the lining of the womb, making it less likely that a fertilised egg will implant in the womb.

**How effective is Nexplanon?**

Nexplanon is an extremely effective method of contraception, mainly because once it is inserted you are protected for three years, and you do not have to remember to take a pill every day. It is over 99% effective.

**Does anything make Nexplanon less effective?**

Some medications may affect the implant especially drugs for epilepsy, TB, HIV; but also St Johns Wort which you can buy. Always check with the doctor or nurse that your usual medication does not interact with Nexplanon.

**What are the advantages of Nexplanon?**

• It works for three years.

• It doesn’t interfere with sex.

• Your fertility will return to normal as soon as the Nexplanon is removed.

• It can be used if you are breast feeding.

• It can be used if you cannot take oestrogen (the hormone contained in the combined oral contraceptive pill or COC).

• It may reduce heavy painful periods.

**What are the disadvantages of Nexplanon?**

• Your periods may change in a way that is not acceptable to you.

• Other possible side effects include headaches, acne, tender breasts, weight gain, decreased sex drive and mood changes but these side effects are not common.

• It requires a small procedure to fit and remove the Nexplanon and leaves a small scar.

• Very rarely having an implant put in or removed from your arm can cause an infection or damage to blood vessels and nerves. On rare occasions it can be difficult to remove the implant from your arm.

• Research about the risk of breast cancer and hormonal contraception is complex and contradictory. Research suggests that users of all hormonal contraception may have a small increase in risk of being diagnosed with breast cancer compared to non-users.

**How will Nexplanon affect my periods?**

Your periods will probably change:

• In some women their periods will stop completely.

• Some women will have irregular periods and bleeding.

• Some women will have periods that last longer than usual.

The changes to your periods can be a nuisance but they are not harmful. Please contact us for advice if you are experiencing prolonged bleeding. We can often help control the bleeding by giving you some additional hormone (in the form of “the pill”) for a short time. We will also want to check that your bleeding is not due to another cause such as infection.

**Can anyone have Nexplanon?**

Nexplanon is not suitable for every woman. The following conditions may mean that Nexplanon is not suitable for you:

• You think you may be pregnant already or you want to become pregnant in the near future.

• You do not want your periods to change.

You have now or have had in the past:

* Cancer of the reproductive organs, for example breast cancer or cancer of the womb.
* A heart attack or stroke.
* Active liver disease.
* Systemic Lupus Erythematosus

**When can I start using Nexplanon?**

Nexplanon can be fitted at any time as long as you are certain that you are not pregnant. You will not be protected from pregnancy for the first seven days so you must use another method of contraception, for example condoms, during this time.

**How is Nexplanon put in?**

Nexplanon will be fitted by a specially trained doctor. They will give you a local anaesthetic injection, to numb a small area on your upper arm, before it is fitted. The implant takes only a few minutes to be fitted. It is similar to having an injection. After the fitting, your arm may feel tender and bruised for a few days. The doctor fitting the implant will put a dressing over it, which you should keep on until the wound has healed; usually at least 72 hours. There will be a bandage over the top which you should keep on for 24 hours. This helps reduce bruising. If you wish to have a shower whilst the dressing is on, cover it with clingfilm to keep it dry. You should be able to feel the implant under your skin, but it will not affect how you move your arm

**How is Nexplanon taken out?**

Nexplanon can be left in place for three years or can be removed earlier if you decide that you want to stop using it. A specially trained doctor must take it out. You will have a local anaesthetic injection to numb the area. You will be left with a small scar on your inner arm and you will have to wear a dressing on your arm afterwards for 3 days. If you want to have another implant fitted it can be done at the same time.

**I have just had a baby when can I have Nexplanon fitted?**

Nexplanon can be fitted from three weeks after the birth of your baby.

**Can I use Nexplanon after a miscarriage or abortion?**

Nexplanon can be fitted immediately after a miscarriage or abortion and will start working straight away.

**Does Nexplanon protect me from sexually transmitted infections (STIs)?**

No, the implant only protects you from pregnancy. To avoid STIs including chlamydia, gonorrhoea and HIV it is important to use condoms as well. Condoms are available free from the Sexual Health Clinic

Last updated 07/05/24 VR