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pregnancy by releasing constant small amounts of progestogen into the body.

How does it work?

Progestogen is a hormone, which works as a contraceptive by

- Stopping ovulation, the release of an egg by the ovary
- Making the mucus (sticky fluid) at the entrance of the uterus thicker so the sperm can't get through
- Changing the lining of the uterus (womb) so a fertilized egg cannot grow

Can I get pregnant?

There have been no pregnancies yet recorded using this method.

How do I get the implant?

The implant needs to be put in your arm by a doctor trained in this procedure either at your local surgery or a Shine SA Clinic. The area above your elbow on the inner arm is first numbed with local anaesthetic. Then the implant is put in under the skin with a special introducer rather like having an injection. The arm is bandaged to try to avoid any bruising. The bandage should be left on for 24 hours. If the arm feels sore, take some Paracetamol every 4 hours until it settles.

When does it start working?

If the implant is put in within the first three days of the menstrual cycle (where day 1 is the first day of the period), it is immediately effective. If given at other times in the menstrual cycle other contraceptive measures, such as condoms, should be used for 7 days.

How do I stop using it?

To stop using the implant, it needs to be removed. This has to be done by a health practitioner, GP or at a Shine SA clinic. It involves an injection of local anaesthetic and a small cut to the skin to find the tip of the implant and remove it. This usually takes 5-10 minutes. The device should be taken out and replaced with a new implant every 3 years or whenever you want to stop using it.

If the implant is taken out when will I be fertile again?

Most women return to their normal menstrual cycles and fertility within the month after taking out the implant. If you do not want to be pregnant you need to use other contraception as soon as the device is removed.

What is the cost?

It is the price of a prescription or the benefit if you are on a Health Care Card.

What happens to your body with the implant in you?

Apart from making you unable to get pregnant there may be few other side effects as it is a very small dose of hormone.

Things that can change:

1. **Bleeding Patterns**

- No periods are quite common and you do not need to worry about being pregnant
- Periods at the normal time but lighter and less painful happens for many women using this method
- Bleeding at odd times when you are not due can also happen
- Heavy irregular bleeding happens sometimes and if it doesn't settle it may be a good reason to take the implant out

2. **Weight gain** can occur but it is not often due to the implant alone.

3. **Headache, breast pain and mood changes** can occur and may go away after the initial few weeks

4. **Painful periods** and acne usually improve with the implant though a small number of women will find that they can develop these problems for the first time after the implant is put in.

What should I do if I get frequent or heavy bleeding?

Bleeding is a common side effect and will usually settle down within 3 months. The bleeding does not change its contraceptive effect.

If bleeding persists you can take Ponstan, Nurofen or other period pain drugs in the recommended normal daily dose for 7 days.

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- Tranexamic acid-two tablets taken three times a day for at least a week
- Extra progestogen (eg progesterone only pill)for 4-6 weeks
- Oestrogen (either the pillor hormone replacement therapy) for 4-6 weeks

If bleeding doesn't settle it may be best to consider another method of contraception.

Who should NOT use the contraceptive implant?

Pregnant women, women with unexplained vaginal bleeding, women with severe liver disease or acute porphyria (a rare disease) should not use the implant.

Who should use the implant?

This method suits most women who don't mind having it put in under the skin, including young women and women around menopause who still need contraception. It is relatively safe for heavy smokers and diabetics to use.

Are you at risk of sexually transmitted infections?

The implant does not protect you against sexually transmitted infections.

Condoms are needed to help protect you from infection.

SHine SA Contact Details

Southern Primary Health Care Team

Woodcroft Community Centre
175 Bains Road, Morphett Vale SA 5162
Telephone: 08 8325 8164
Facsimile: 08 8325 8173

Northern Primary Health Care Team

43 Peachey Road Davoren Park SA 5112
Telephone: 08 8252 7955
Facsimile: 08 8252 7966

East/West Primary Health Care Team

17 Phillips Street Kensington SA 5068
Telephone: 08 8431 5177
Facsimile: 08 8364 2389
Clinic Appointments: 08 8364 5033

Professional Education

Telephone: 08 8431 5177
Facsimile: 08 8364 2389
Email: SHineSACourses@dhs.sa.gov.au

Library & Resource Centre

Telephone: 08 8364 5537
Facsimile: 08 8364 2389
Email (Library): SHineSALibrary@dhs.sa.gov.au
Email (Resource Ctre):
SHineSAResources@dhs.sa.gov.au

Sexual Healthline

9am-1pm, Mon . Fri
Telephone: 08 8364 0444
Facsimile: 08 8364 2389
Country Callers (Toll Free): 1800 188 171
TTY: 08 8431 5177
Email: sexualhealthhotline@dhs.sa.gov.au

Internet

www.shinesa.org.au
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The Contraceptive Implant

Implanon

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