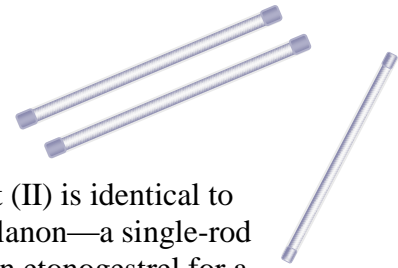


Fact Sheet: Contraceptive Implants

Progestin-only implants consist of hormone-filled capsules or rods that are inserted under the skin in a woman's upper arm. Current systems consist of one or two rods.



Jadelle is a two-rod system designed to deliver a steady daily dose of levonorgestrel over a period of five years. Sino-implant (II) is identical to Jadelle but is approved for use over a period of four years. Implanon—a single-rod system—continually releases a low, steady dose of the progestin etonogestrel for a period of up to three years.

Norplant, which is effective for five years, is an older implant system with six rods that is no longer manufactured. Women who are still relying on Norplant will need to consider a newer implant system or another contraceptive method when their existing implants are no longer effective.

Primary mechanisms of action

- Thicken cervical mucus (make it difficult for sperm to penetrate)
- Partially prevent ovulation (in about half of menstrual cycles)

Characteristics of progestin-only implants

- Highly effective
- Easy to use
- Long-acting pregnancy protection but easily reversible
- Do not interfere with intercourse, private
- Have no effect on quality or quantity of breast milk
- Have non-contraceptive health benefits (help prevent ectopic pregnancy and iron-deficiency anemia)
- Have side effects
- Insertion involves minor surgical procedure and some discomfort for a day or two
- Cannot be initiated or discontinued without a provider
- Provide no protection from sexually transmitted infections including HIV

Side effects (*generally not signs of a health problem; may diminish or change over time*)

- Light spotting or bleeding
- Irregular bleeding
- Prolonged bleeding
- Infrequent bleeding
- Amenorrhea
- Weight change
- Abdominal pain
- Acne (can improve or worsen)
- Headaches, dizziness, mood changes, nausea, and breast tenderness (less common than with combined oral contraceptives)

Who can use progestin-only implants

Women of any parity or reproductive age, married or unmarried, who:

- Want to use this method of contraception
- Have no known conditions that preclude safe use (such conditions are rare)

Who should not initiate progestin-only implants (for a complete list, see *WHO eligibility criteria*)

Women who have the following known conditions:

- Breastfeeding while less than six weeks postpartum
- Acute deep venous thrombosis (unless on established anticoagulant therapy)
- Unexplained vaginal bleeding (before evaluation)
- History of or current breast cancer
- Severe cirrhosis; malignant liver tumors; or benign liver tumors, with the exception of focal nodular hyperplasia (which is a tumor that consists of scar tissue and normal liver cells)

Use of progestin-only implants by women with HIV and AIDS

- Women with HIV and AIDS who do not take antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) can use progestin-only implants without restrictions. Women with AIDS who take antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) can generally use progestin-only implants, since the effectiveness of implants seems not to be significantly affected by ARVs.

Provide follow-up and counseling for

- Any client concerns or questions
- Side effects, especially irregular bleeding or spotting or amenorrhea
- Any signs of complications (although rare), counsel the woman to come back immediately if any of the following symptoms develop:
 - infection at the insertion site
 - very bad headaches that start or become worse after initiation
 - unusually heavy or prolonged bleeding
 - severe pain in the lower abdomen (symptom of ectopic pregnancy)
 - unusually yellow skin or eyes

Explain to the client that implants can be removed any time for any reason.

Dispelling myths regarding progestin-only implants

Progestin-only implants **do not**:

- Break and move around within a woman's body
- Cause birth defects
- Cause cancer