Preparing for a contraceptive implant appointment

Information for women

Sexual Health
NHS Fife
**How do I find out about the contraceptive implant?**

You can discuss the implant with a doctor or nurse at your GP practice or a Sexual Health (SH) clinic.

It is useful to talk through the fitting procedure, benefits and side effects of the implant and alternative options.

You can get further reliable information about the contraceptive implant

Leaflets on implants are available from your sexual health clinic or GP. Leaflets, video clips and a short film about coils are available online [https://www.sexualhealthfife.scot.nhs.uk/](https://www.sexualhealthfife.scot.nhs.uk/)

**How do I make an appointment?**

Please call the clinic on **01592 647979** (8.30 am – 1.30pm)

SRH Clinics are held at different sites and times across Fife. See our website for further information [https://www.sexualhealthfife.scot.nhs.uk/](https://www.sexualhealthfife.scot.nhs.uk/)

On-line booking may be available for some contraceptive clinics - please see our website for further information

**How long will the appointment take?**

Routine appointments for fitting, change or removal usually take around 30 minutes.

**How is an implant inserted or removed?**
You will be given a local anaesthetic injection into a small area of skin in the inside of your upper arm. This local anaesthetic injection will sting a little for a few seconds. We check that the skin is numb and then the implant is inserted or removed. The incision is less than 5mm for fitting and may be a little bigger (5-10mm) for a routine removal.

You will not feel pain but may feel pressure on your arm. The fitting procedure usually takes around 5 minutes, removal may take 10 minutes.

If you are having the implant changed it is often possible to use the same incision for removing the old implant and fitting the new one. The small incision is covered with an adhesive dressing and sometimes paper stitches and a bandage.

**What should I expect afterwards?**

We suggest you keep your arm dry for 24 to 48 hours. You can then take off all the dressings and leave the incision open to the air or use a normal sticking plaster to protect the area until it has healed.

You might be uncomfortable over the wound site for the next day or so but can expect to be able to do normal activities including driving. You may want to avoid sporting activities for a few days if your arm may be grabbed / knocked into.

It is very common to have bruising around the implant after insertion or removal. This will fade over a week or so.
Infection is rare but seek medical advice if the area becomes increasingly red or swollen or if there is a pus-like yellow discharge from the wound.

Contact the clinic where you had the procedure done.

Out of hours contact NHS 24.

**What should I do about contraception before having the implant fitted?**

Use contraception carefully or abstain right up until the implant is fitted. We will advise you about how soon you can rely on it at the appointment.

**What should I do about contraception if I’m having an implant removed?**

You can have sex without extra contraception until the implant comes out.

The contraceptive effect stops as soon as it is removed so it is ideal to have chosen or even started your new method of contraception before the implant comes out.

If you would like a coil fitted at the same appointment as the implant removal please let us know so we allow enough time although some women prefer to attend for coil insertion a few weeks before the implant is removed.
**What should I do about contraception if I’m having an implant changed?**

If your implant is still in date you do not need to use any additional contraception before or after the implant change.

If your current implant was inserted more than 3 years ago it may not be effective anymore. You would need to use condoms or a contraceptive pill until your appointment and for the first 7 days with the new implant and then do a pregnancy test after 3 to 4 weeks.

**My implant needs to be removed but it is too deep to feel- what will happen?**

This happens for around 1 in every 1000 women using a contraceptive implant. We need to know the implant is deep so we can arrange a 45 minute appointment with the right doctor at the SRH clinic. If a doctor or nurse has already tried to remove your implant and made a cut in the skin we prefer to wait for 6 weeks before we attempt to remove this again.

We may see you at the clinic before this as if we cannot feel the implant we would arrange an ultrasound scan to try to find it.

We may need to refer you to another clinic to have this removed. This may require local anaesthetic or general anaesthetic and the skin incision is larger (1-1.5cm) if the implant is deep and usually 2-3 stitches are needed. We will advise you about how to look after the incision.
If your implant has expired you will need to consider another method of contraception until your implant is changed - or you can have a new one inserted into your other arm in the meantime.

**Further information**

If you need further information or wish to change your appointment please call:

If you can’t keep your appointment for any reason please let us know. We can then offer your appointment to someone else.

Sexual Health Service

☎️ 01592 647979