Te Whatu Ora
Health New Zealand
Waitaha Canterbury

LEVONORGESTREL (implant)

lee-voe-nor-jes-trel

What does it do?

Levonorgestrel is a progestogen hormone used to prevent pregnancy, or to treat endometriosis.
See Sexual Wellbeing Aotearoa for more information.

Before you start

- It's important to make sure you're not pregnant.
- Tell your doctor if you, or someone in your family, has ever had breast cancer.
- Your implant is effective at preventing pregnancy straight away if it is inserted within 5 days of the start of your period. If it is inserted after this, you need to use condoms (or don't have sex) for the next 7 days.

How is it given?

Two implants are inserted under the skin in your upper arm by a health professional.
Keep the area dry for a few days, and follow your health professional's instructions on when to remove the plasters and dressing. Your arm might be sore or bruised for a few days.
Your implant can stay in place for up to 5 years.

Can you take other medicines?

Tell your pharmacist or doctor about all medicines or treatments that you may be taking, including vitamins, herbal products (e.g. St John's wort) or recreational drugs.

What side effects might you notice?

Side Effects	Recommended action
Changes in periods	Irregular bleeding is common in the first 3-6 months. This is not harmful and usually improves with time. After this, some women will not have any periods at all.
Mood changes Headache Acne Weight gain Sore breasts Nausea, bloating	Tell your doctor if troublesome

If you notice any other effects, discuss them with your doctor or pharmacist.

Other information:

- If you can't feel your implant, or you notice any changes around your implant, you should use a condom (or don't have sex) until your health professional has checked the implant is still in place.
- Your implant does not protect you from sexually transmitted infections.
- You can have your implant taken out at any time. This must be done by your health professional – do not try and take it out yourself. Sometimes the implant is hard to take out, and you may need another visit to remove it.
- Having an implant doesn't make it harder to get pregnant if you want to later on. You can get pregnant as soon as your implant is removed.