

sex talk.

answers to your questions about sex and relationships

wildfact

Free tampons and pads available at the Women's Resource Center – Student Union 4th Floor in CSIL (for a limited time).

Q How new is the birth control implant?

A. Contraception has evolved greatly over the years, especially after modern hormonal methods hit the market in 1960. The trend continues.

The first implantable contraceptive, Norplant, was approved in Finland for use in 1983 and later approved by the United States Food & Drug Administration in 1990. Norplant consisted of 6 thin rods, containing a progestin hormone. The implants were inserted under the skin of a woman's arm and were designed to provide effective birth control for up to 5 years. Implants are one of the most reliable contraceptive methods developed, rivaling the effectiveness of sterilization and intrauterine devices.

The next generation of implantables has been marketed under the name Implanon®, consisting of a single rod that is 4 cm long and 2 mm in diameter. It contains the same progestin used in many oral contraceptive pills. The implant is a highly effective contraceptive with minimal side effects.

Advantages include a high rate of pregnancy prevention (over 99%), ease of use, relief of pain from cramps and endometriosis, reduced risk of ectopic (outside the uterus) pregnancy, no estrogen, and ease of reversibility. Disadvantages include irregular bleeding, rare insertion complications, the need for clinical insertion/removal, and lack of protection from sexually transmitted infections.

The newest implant, Nexplanon®, is now available in the US. It is greater than 99% effective in preventing pregnancy. One of the most appealing benefits of using an implant is the convenience of not having to take a pill, get a shot, or change a patch... for three whole years.

Now, if the researchers would just come up with a safe and effective birth control method for men!

Sources: *Contraceptive Technology* by Robert A. Hatcher, MD, MPH and www.nexplanon-usa.com



Have a question? Send it to sextalk@email.arizona.edu

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