

# Information about Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives

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## What is Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC)?

This name covers a variety of birth control methods which work for months or years. The woman who uses these has no day to day control over her fertility, or the side effects of the drug or device. LARCs require a medical professional to fit, implant or inject, and a medical professional to remove as well.

## What are the different types of LARCs?

There are three different types of LARCs:

**Injections:** Depo Provera

**Implants:** Jadelle and Implanon

**IUDs:** Mirena and the Copper IUD

## Can IUDs and Implants move?

Yes. Some implants have moved so far that ultrasound was needed to find them for removal. [\[1\]](#) IUDs can partially or fully come out (expulsion) or can perforate the wall of the womb (uterus) and sometimes other organs too. [\[2\]](#)[\[3\]](#)[\[4\]](#)[\[5\]](#)

## Can I get pregnant using these methods?

Yes. There is no 'contraceptive' that is completely effective at preventing pregnancy. The user failure rate for Depo Provera is 20 times higher than the generally stated 'perfect use' figure. [\[6\]](#)[\[7\]](#) When pregnancies occur in women on LARCs, there is a high rate of potentially life threatening ectopic pregnancies (where the embryo implants outside of the womb (uterus)). [\[8\]](#)

## I'm using a LARC, how do I know if I am pregnant?

The patterns of menstrual bleeding can and do change while using LARCs. Menstrual bleeding eventually stops in many women using injections or implants, so it can be very difficult to tell if you are pregnant. Taking a pregnancy test is the only way to be sure. A negative test may be incorrect because it has been done too soon. It is a good idea to take another pregnancy test up to three weeks after intercourse if you are still concerned.

### **If you are worried that you might be pregnant please call.**

Our friendly team offer free and confidential pregnancy tests and can talk through your situation and discuss your options.

**Option Line 0800 367 5433**

## Do LARCs protect against STIs (STDs)?

No. Depo Provera may even make you more susceptible to contracting Chlamydia or Gonorrhoea. [\[9\]](#)

## What are the common side effects?

Each LARC will have its own side effects. The following are common side effects among Long Acting Reversible Contraceptive (LARC) users.

Most users of LARCs have changes in their menstrual bleeding pattern including irregular, prolonged and heavy bleeding or no bleeding at all.

Other common side effects include:

• headache	• nervousness	• dizziness	• hirsutism (male pattern hair growth)
• decreased libido	• acne	• ovarian cyst	• upper genital tract infection
• migraine	• depression	• nausea	• abdominal pain or discomfort
• back pain	• pelvic pain	• fatigue	• weight gain <a href="#">[10]</a> <a href="#">[11]</a> <a href="#">[12]</a>
• breast pain			

There are also concerns about loss of bone density and breast cancer among users. [\[13\]](#)[\[14\]](#)

### Are there any concerns about osteoporosis?

Depo Provera, Jadelle and Implanon are known to cause bone density loss. It is worse for Depo Provera users. The bone density loss continues as long as the method is used. [\[13\]](#)

### Do LARCs cause abortions?

There are three listed modes of action:

- stopping ovulation;
- changing cervical mucus; and
- preventing the embryo (newly formed human being) from implanting in the uterus (womb). [\[10\]](#)[\[12\]](#)[\[15\]](#)

The first two actions are contraceptive as they prevent conception (fertilization). The third action is an abortion as it happens after conception (fertilization).

Those that say that LARCs do not cause early abortions believe that pregnancy only begins at implantation, when the embryo settles into the lining of the womb. However, science tells us that at the moment of fertilization (when the sperm meets the egg) defining features such as gender, eye colour and hair colour, among other things, are all determined.

### Which LARC users have taken legal action?

Jadelle's predecessor, Norplant was removed from the US market after 50,000 women sued the company that made it. Lawsuits have been filed against the makers of Mirena [\[16\]](#) with over 70,000 women reporting complications to the FDA in the US. [\[17\]](#)

### Have you considered learning about your natural fertility cycle?

[Natural Fertility Regulation](#) lets you take charge of your fertility

without artificial hormones and no nasty side effects.

It is knowledge of your body that you really should have!

**Phone 0800 367 5433 to learn more.**

### Footnotes

The following are footnotes to the text above. They also serve as reference material for the pamphlet *What you need to know about Long Acting Reversible Contraceptives* produced by Family Life International NZ.

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