PATIENT & CAREGIVER EDUCATION

Etonogestrel

This information from Lexicomp® explains what you need to know about this medication, including what it’s used for, how to take it, its side effects, and when to call your healthcare provider.

Brand Names: US

Nexplanon

Brand Names: Canada

Nexplanon

What is this drug used for?

- It is used to prevent pregnancy.

What do I need to tell my doctor BEFORE I take this drug?

- If you are allergic to this drug; any part of this drug; or any other drugs, foods, or substances. Tell your doctor about the allergy and what signs you had.
- If you have any of these health problems: Liver disease or liver tumors.
- If you have ever had any of these health problems: Blood clots, breast cancer or other kind of cancer where hormones make it grow, heart attack, or stroke.
- If you have unexplained vaginal bleeding.
- If you have given birth within the last 21 days.
- If you are pregnant or may be pregnant. Do not take this drug if you are

pregnant.

- If you have not started your period.

This is not a list of all drugs or health problems that interact with this drug.

Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all of your drugs (prescription or OTC, natural products, vitamins) and health problems. You must check to make sure that it is safe for you to take this drug with all of your drugs and health problems. Do not start, stop, or change the dose of any drug without checking with your doctor.

What are some things I need to know or do while I take this drug?

- Tell all of your health care providers that you take this drug. This includes your doctors, nurses, pharmacists, and dentists.
- After this drug has been put in, you may need to use a non-hormone birth control like condoms for some time. Talk with your doctor.
- Breaking or bending of the implant may happen from things like contact sports or pushing on the area where it was placed. If the implant breaks, it can move from the original spot. If you cannot feel the implant or if you think that it has broken, bent, or moved while in your arm, talk with your doctor.
- Problems have happened when this drug was put in or taken out. These include pain; burning, numbness, or tingling; dizziness; passing out; bruising or bleeding; scars; or infection. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- If you get pregnant while taking this drug, the chance of pregnancy outside of the uterus (ectopic pregnancy) may be raised. Talk with your doctor.
- Blood clots have happened with this drug. Sometimes, these blood clots have been deadly. Talk with the doctor.
- Talk with your doctor if you will need to be still for long periods of time

like long trips, bedrest after surgery, or illness. Not moving for long periods may raise your chance of blood clots.

- Call your doctor right away if you have signs of a blood clot like chest pain or pressure; coughing up blood; shortness of breath; swelling, warmth, numbness, change of color, or pain in a leg or arm; or trouble speaking or swallowing.
- A cyst on the ovary may rarely happen.
- If you have high blood sugar (diabetes), talk with your doctor. This drug may raise blood sugar.
- Check your blood sugar as you have been told by your doctor.
- Certain drugs, herbal products, or health problems may cause hormone-based birth control to not work as well. Be sure your doctor knows about all of your drugs and health problems. You will need to see if you also need to use a non-hormone form of birth control like condoms.
- This drug does not stop the spread of diseases like HIV or hepatitis that are passed through having sex. Do not have any kind of sex without using a latex or polyurethane condom. If you have questions, talk with your doctor.
- The chance of getting cervical cancer may be higher in people who take hormone-based birth control. However, this may be due to other reasons. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- Some studies have shown the risk of breast cancer is raised when taking hormone-based birth control for a long time. However, other studies have not shown this risk. If you have questions, talk with the doctor.
- If this drug is removed and you do not want to get pregnant, use birth control right after it is removed. Pregnancy has happened shortly after this drug was removed. Talk with the doctor.
- A pregnancy test will be done to show that you are NOT pregnant before starting this drug. If you get pregnant while taking this drug, call your doctor right away.
- Tell your doctor if you are breast-feeding. You will need to talk about any

risks to your baby.

What are some side effects that I need to call my doctor about right away?

WARNING/CAUTION: Even though it may be rare, some people may have very bad and sometimes deadly side effects when taking a drug. Tell your doctor or get medical help right away if you have any of the following signs or symptoms that may be related to a very bad side effect:

- Signs of an allergic reaction, like rash; hives; itching; red, swollen, blistered, or peeling skin with or without fever; wheezing; tightness in the chest or throat; trouble breathing, swallowing, or talking; unusual hoarseness; or swelling of the mouth, face, lips, tongue, or throat.
- Signs of liver problems like dark urine, tiredness, decreased appetite, upset stomach or stomach pain, light-colored stools, throwing up, or yellow skin or eyes.
- Signs of high blood pressure like very bad headache or dizziness, passing out, or change in eyesight.
- Signs of gallbladder problems like pain in the upper right belly area, right shoulder area, or between the shoulder blades; yellow skin or eyes; fever with chills; bloating; or very upset stomach or throwing up.
- Signs of skin infection like oozing, heat, swelling, redness, or pain.
- Weakness on 1 side of the body, trouble speaking or thinking, change in balance, drooping on one side of the face, or blurred eyesight.
- Depression or other mood changes.
- Eyesight changes or loss, bulging eyes, or change in how contact lenses feel.
- A lump in the breast, breast pain or soreness, or nipple discharge.
- Flu-like signs.
- Vaginal bleeding that is not normal.
- This drug may cause you to swell or keep fluid in your body. Tell your

doctor if you have swelling, weight gain, or trouble breathing.

What are some other side effects of this drug?

All drugs may cause side effects. However, many people have no side effects or only have minor side effects. Call your doctor or get medical help if any of these side effects or any other side effects bother you or do not go away:

- Weight gain.
- Dizziness or headache.
- Pimples (acne).
- Vaginal irritation.
- Period (menstrual) changes. These include spotting between cycles or very light periods.
- Irritation where rod was placed.
- Stomach pain.
- Throat irritation.
- Back pain.
- Upset stomach.
- Feeling nervous and excitable.

These are not all of the side effects that may occur. If you have questions about side effects, call your doctor. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

You may report side effects to your national health agency.

You may report side effects to the FDA at 1-800-332-1088. You may also report side effects at https://www.fda.gov/medwatch.

How is this drug best taken?

Use this drug as ordered by your doctor. Read all information given to you. Follow all instructions closely.

- A rod is placed under the skin in the upper arm. This is a minor surgery. The rod must be changed every 3 years.
- Have blood work checked as you have been told by the doctor. Talk with the doctor.
- If you drink grapefruit juice or eat grapefruit often, talk with your doctor.
- Be sure to have regular breast exams and gynecology check-ups. You will also need to do breast self-exams as you have been told.
- High blood pressure has happened with this drug. Have your blood pressure checked as you have been told by your doctor.
- This drug may affect certain lab tests. Tell all of your health care providers and lab workers that you take this drug.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- Call your doctor to find out what to do.

How do I store and/or throw out this drug?

- If you need to store this drug at home, talk with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist about how to store it.

General drug facts

- If your symptoms or health problems do not get better or if they become worse, call your doctor.
- Do not share your drugs with others and do not take anyone else’s drugs.
- Keep all drugs in a safe place. Keep all drugs out of the reach of children and pets.
- Throw away unused or expired drugs. Do not flush down a toilet or pour

down a drain unless you are told to do so. Check with your pharmacist if you have questions about the best way to throw out drugs. There may be drug take-back programs in your area.

- Some drugs may have another patient information leaflet. If you have any questions about this drug, please talk with your doctor, nurse, pharmacist, or other health care provider.
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- If you think there has been an overdose, call your poison control center or get medical care right away. Be ready to tell or show what was taken, how much, and when it happened.

Consumer Information Use and Disclaimer

This generalized information is a limited summary of diagnosis, treatment, and/or medication information. It is not meant to be comprehensive and should be used as a tool to help the user understand and/or assess potential diagnostic and treatment options. It does NOT include all information about conditions, treatments, medications, side effects, or risks that may apply to a specific patient. It is not intended to be medical advice or a substitute for the medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment of a health care provider based on the health care provider's examination and assessment of a patient's specific and unique circumstances. Patients must speak with a health care provider for complete information about their health, medical questions, and treatment options, including any risks or benefits regarding use of medications. This information does not endorse any treatments or medications as safe, effective, or approved for treating a specific patient. UpToDate, Inc. and its affiliates disclaim any warranty or liability relating to this information or the use thereof. The use of this information is governed by the Terms of Use, available at https://www.wolterskluwer.com/en/know/clinical-effectiveness-terms.

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If you have any questions, contact a member of your care team directly. If you're a patient at MSK and you need to reach a provider after 5 p.m., during the weekend, or on a holiday, call 212-639-2000.

For more resources, visit www.mskcc.org/pe to search our virtual library.

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