



Intra Uterine Device (IUD)

The IUD is a type of long-acting reversible contraception (LARC) that goes in your uterus.

- More than 99% effective
- Works for three, five or 10 years depending on the type of IUD
- 'Fit and forget' contraception – you don't need to do anything after it is put in
- There are two types: one with hormones, one without hormones
- Your period is likely to change. There might be more or less bleeding depending on whether it contains hormones or not

WHAT IS AN INTRA UTERINE DEVICE (IUD)?

An IUD is a small object that goes inside your uterus.

There are two types of IUDs:

- Copper IUD - contains copper, a type of metal
- Hormonal IUD – contains the hormone progestogen (Mirena or Jaydess)

The IUD is put in your uterus by an experienced nurse or doctor. This is simple and safe. The procedure itself takes about five to 10 minutes, but your appointment will take about 30 minutes. During this time the nurse or doctor will explain how the insertion is done and will give you instructions about what to expect once your IUD is in place.

You can't feel it or tell it is there except by checking for the threads. If you are having penis in vagina sex, your partner should not be able to feel it. You can still use tampons.

The removal threads come out of your cervix and curl up inside the top of your vagina – they don't hang outside.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The hormones or the copper stop the sperm reaching the egg. Sometimes, sperm does reach the egg (fertilisation) so the IUD stops the egg from attaching to the wall of the uterus.

HOW WELL DOES IT WORK?

Copper and hormonal IUDs are at least 99% effective. Only 1 in 100 people will get pregnant each year.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

All IUDs are free if you are a New Zealand resident. If you want an IUD, you need two appointments - one to check if it's the right choice for you, and another to have it put in.

WHAT WILL I NOTICE?

Most people notice some changes to their period.

With a copper IUD, your periods might be longer, heavier and more painful, especially in the first few months. This usually gets better with time.

With a hormonal IUD (Mirena or Jaydess), you might have spotting in the first few months and then light or no periods.

CAN I GET PREGNANT AFTER THE IUD IS TAKEN OUT?

Yes, you will be able to get pregnant as soon as the IUD is taken out.

Pregnancy is very rare with an IUD in place. If you do get pregnant with an IUD in, there is no extra risk for your baby, but there is a risk of complication in the pregnancy. If you think you might be pregnant, talk with your doctor as soon as possible. It is best to remove the IUD.

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES?

- Long acting – it lasts for between 3 and 10 years depending on the type of IUD
- Reversible – you can choose to have it taken out at any time. After that, you will be able to get pregnant
- 99% effective – it works very well
- You don't need to think about contraception every day
- Does not affect breastfeeding
- Does not get in the way of sex
- The copper IUD does not contain any hormones
- The copper IUD can also be used as emergency contraception
- The hormonal IUD has a very small amount of hormones and most people have no side effects from this
- The Mirena (a hormonal IUD) can help with period bleeding and pain, and most people will have light bleeding or no periods at all.

Studies show that IUDs do not cause pimples, headaches, sore breasts, nausea, mood changes, loss of sex drive or weight gain. There is no evidence of an extra risk of cancer.

WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES?

- Some people feel pain, cramps or dizziness when the IUD is put in or taken out.

There are some risks from having an IUD put in:

- There is a small risk of infection (about 1%) when an IUD is put in
- There is a very small risk of damage to the uterus (about 1 in 1000 people)
- A copper IUD might give you more bleeding and cramping during your period, but this usually gets better over time
- The copper IUD can cause an allergic reaction, but this is very rare
- The hormonal IUD might give you irregular or light bleeding
- The IUD can sometimes come out by itself (about 5% of all IUDs). You can check the threads are still in the right place at any time.

WHO CAN GET AN IUD?

Most people can use an IUD, including those who are young and those who have not had children.

Hormonal IUDs are a really good option if you have heavy or painful periods.

If you have an infection, you should get it treated before you get an IUD put in.

If you have heavy or painful periods you should not get a copper IUD because it might make them worse.

WHEN CAN I GET AN IUD?

An IUD may be put in at any time you choose. You must not already be pregnant.

Some good times to get it put in are:

- While you have your period or just after
- 6 weeks after your baby is born
- At the time of a surgical abortion
- As emergency contraception after unprotected sex (copper IUD).

HOW LONG CAN I LEAVE MY IUD IN?

An IUD can stay in place for three, five or 10 years before it needs to be replaced, depending on the type of IUD. When you have it put in, the nurse or doctor will tell you when you will need to have it replaced.

You may be able to keep the IUD longer if you are in your 40s. If you get a copper IUD put in after you turn 40 or a hormonal IUD put in after you turn 45, your IUD may be able to stay in place until menopause. Ask the nurse or doctor if this is an option for you.

DOES IT PROTECT ME FROM STIS?

No. You need to use condoms (and lubricant) to protect yourself from sexually transmissible infections (STIs). If there is a chance you may have an STI, have a check-up.

