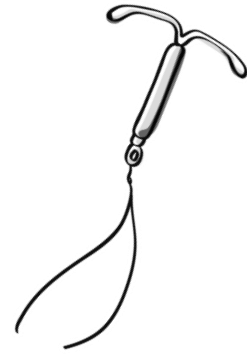




Intrauterine Device (IUD)



The Intrauterine Device (IUD) is a safe and effective way to prevent pregnancy, but it doesn't protect you against STIs. Use a condom along with the patch to protect yourself and your partner(s).

How does the IUD work?

The Intrauterine Device (IUD) is a small t-shaped device inserted into the uterus by a health care provider. There are two types of IUD. The Copper intrauterine device (Cu-IUD) which does not contain hormones, and the levonorgestrel-releasing intrauterine system (LNG-IUS), which contains the hormone progestin. Once in place, there is nothing to remember every day. Either kind of IUD can be used by women who can't take estrogen.

The Copper IUD (Cu- IUD) prevents pregnancy by preventing sperm from reaching the egg. Sperm don't like copper, so when an IUD is placed in your uterus sperm won't travel there.

The hormone releasing IUD, or intrauterine system (LNG-IUS) prevents pregnancy by:

- changing the cervical mucus, making it more difficult for sperm to get to the egg.
- preventing your ovaries from releasing an egg (pregnancy can't happen if the egg and sperm don't meet).

Depending on the type of IUD you chose, it will prevent pregnancy for 3-12 years. The IUD is not permanent. If you decide you want to become pregnant, a health care provider can easily remove your IUD.

How do I get started on the IUD?

At an appointment, your health care provider will ask you questions about your medical history, perform a quick exam of your vagina, cervix and uterus, and test you for STIs (if you haven't had a recent test already). Some sexual health clinics have IUDs available to purchase on site. Most of the time, you will be given a prescription to fill at a pharmacy, then return for a second appointment to have your IUD inserted.

Inserting your IUD only takes about 5 minutes. Your health care provider will use a speculum and a special inserter to place your IUD through your cervix and into your uterus. Your IUD can be inserted at any time during your menstrual cycle. Some people find the insertion of an IUD slightly painful, but any discomfort doesn't usually last very long. Some people have cramping and dizziness and need to take it easy for the rest of the day. Other people feel completely normal after their IUD is inserted.

Your IUD will remain inside your uterus and a string will stick out of your cervix 1-2 inches. This string allows your health care provider to remove your IUD later. You can feel for the string by putting your fingers inside your vagina and reaching up towards your cervix.



An IUD is one of the most effective types of birth control because there is nothing to remember daily, weekly or monthly.

IUD lasts for 3-12 years (depending on the brand).

99.8% Effective

Meaning 2 out of 1000 women using the pill perfectly will get pregnant in a year.

Effectiveness is not affected by other medications.

In addition to being a regular form of contraception, Copper IUD is also the most effective form of emergency contraception (EC) when inserted within 7 days of unprotected vaginal sex.

What if my IUD falls out?

It is rare for an IUD to fall out, but if it is going to happen it's usually in the first 3 months or during your menstrual cycle. If your IUD falls out, you are not protected against pregnancy.

Use condoms to prevent pregnancy until you are able to make an appointment with your health care provider to have a new IUD re-inserted.



If you have the IUD that fell out, bring it with you to your appointment, your health care provider will want to make sure it is complete, and no piece of the old IUD is left in your uterus before the new one is inserted.

Your health care provider may ask you to take a pregnancy test before a new IUD is inserted.

If you aren't sure what to do, talk with your health care provider or visit www.sexlifesask.ca for more information.



What side effects can I expect from an IUD?

Some side effects from the IUD are less desirable than others. Many of the less desirable ones often get better after your IUD has been in place for a few months. Side effects can include: changes to menstrual periods (periods become irregular, lighter, or stop all together) ,spotting, and increased menstrual cramps.

Some people feel discomfort when their IUD is inserted and cramping or backaches for a few days later.

Some side effects can be warning signs of something more serious. If you have any of the following symptoms, you should let your health care provider know as soon as possible: bad cramping or pain in your lower stomach, unexplained fever, chills or trouble breathing, your IUD is coming through your cervix or the length of your IUD string feels shorter or longer than before, pain or bleeding during sex, abnormal vaginal discharge, vaginal bleeding that is heavier than usual.

Who should NOT use an IUD?

The IUD is very safe for most people. Some health conditions can increase the risk of serious side effects. You should not get an IUD if you: have an allergy to copper or a bleeding disorder (for copper IUD), have a history of breast cancer (for hormonal IUD), might have an STI or pelvic infection, have untreated cervical cancer, have uterine cancer, have vaginal bleeding that isn't your period, had a termination (abortion) in the last three months.

IS THE IUD RIGHT FOR YOU?

It's important that your contraception method is right for you. If you're struggling with side effects, there are lots of other great contraception options that might be a better fit for you.

Pills



Patch



Ring



Injection



To find out more about contraception or other areas of your sexual health, explore ...

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