

Your intrauterine contraceptive device (IUCD) - what to know after fitting

Women's Health Patient Information

What is an IUCD?

An intrauterine contraceptive device (IUCD) is a small, plastic, T-shaped device that sits inside your womb (uterus) to stop you getting pregnant, help with heavy menstrual bleeding, or as part of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) treatment.

There are two main types:

- **Hormonal IUCD** - slowly releases a hormone called progestogen.
- **Copper IUCD** - contains copper and no hormones.

Today you had a:

What to expect after fitting

It's normal to feel:

- cramping or period pain.
- light bleeding or spotting - only use sanitary towels for the first month.
- tired or a bit uncomfortable.

These should get better in a few days.

How to look after yourself

Rest if you need to after the fitting.

- Take pain medicine (like **paracetamol** or **ibuprofen**) if you feel sore.
- Try not to lift heavy things or do hard exercise on the day of fitting.
- You can have sex after seven days or when you feel ready.

When will the IUCD start working?

- **Copper IUCD** - works straight away.
- **Hormonal IUCD** - works straight away **if fitted during your period**. If not, use condoms for the next **seven** days.

How to check it's still in place

Your IUCD has two small threads that hang through the neck of your womb (called the cervix). You might be able to feel them with clean fingers.

- Check them **once a month**, after your period.
- Don't pull them.
- If you are using a menstrual cup during your period, fully release the suction before you remove it.

Possible side effects

You might notice:

- irregular bleeding or spotting.
- periods may be heavier (with copper IUCD).
- periods may be lighter or stop (with hormonal IUCD).
- cramps.

These usually settle in a few months.

When to get help

Call your doctor or clinic if you:

- have strong or worsening pain.
- bleed heavily (soaking through a pad every hour).
- have smelly discharge.
- have a fever or feel very unwell.
- can't feel the threads, or they feel shorter/longer
- think you might be pregnant.

How long will the IUCD last?

This will depend on the type of IUCD

Mirena (hormonal) - up to eight years for contraception and 5 years for HRT

Kyleena (hormonal) - up to five years

Copper (non-hormonal) - five or 10 years

Need help or have questions?

Your doctor will:

- Call: **0300 019 8028**
- Address: **Harbourside Gynaecology Unit**
- Website: **uhd.nhs.uk** - search 'IUD'

More information:

www.fpa.org.uk

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