

Intrauterine Devices (IUD'S)

WHAT IS AN IUD?

An IUD is a small plastic contraceptive device that is gently inserted into the uterus (womb) by either a physician or nurse practitioner. IUDs are about 98-99% effective in preventing pregnancy and one type of IUD can stay in place for up to 10 years before needing to be replaced. Once inserted, the IUD is immediately effective and when removed, its contraceptive effect is immediately stopped.

HOW DOES THE IUD WORK TO PREVENT PREGNANCY?

The IUD may affect the way the sperm or egg moves and it is thought to prevent the egg and sperm from uniting (fertilization). The copper IUD also causes thickening of the cervical mucus, providing a barrier that prevents sperm from entering the uterus.

CAN ALL WOMEN USE THE IUD?

IUDs are very safe and effective for most women. The IUD is an excellent choice for the woman who has had her children and now wants long-term, but not permanent contraception. The IUD may also be a good choice for the woman who cannot take birth control pills, use Depo-Provera or Norplant and for those who choose not to use a barrier method of contraception such as a diaphragm or vaginal foam.

IUDs are not for women who have impaired response to infection by conditions such as HIV / AIDS, long-term steroid use, or cancer. Women who have more than 1 sex partner have a greater risk of getting a sexually transmitted infection and should not use the IUD.

Because some women have physical or medical conditions that may rule out IUD use, a woman must have a thorough medical history and pelvic examination with Pap smear and tests for sexually transmitted infections (STDs) by a health care provider before an IUD can be inserted.

ADVANTAGES

Highly effective contraceptive method.

Nothing to remember to take or use

Reversible

Method is "private"

Less expensive over time

Can be used by women who breastfeed

No hormonal side effects such as weight gain, bloating, headaches, depression,

and nausea

Possible decrease in blood loss during the menstrual cycle

DISADVANTAGES

Possible irregular bleeding or increased cramping.

Possible expulsion of the device

Increased risks if become pregnant.

(50% will have a miscarriage)

(5% will have an ectopic (tubal) pregnancy)

Not recommended for women with more than 1 sex partner (or recent history of a sexually

transmitted infection)

Does NOT protect against STDs or HIV/AIDS

Possible risk of Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID)

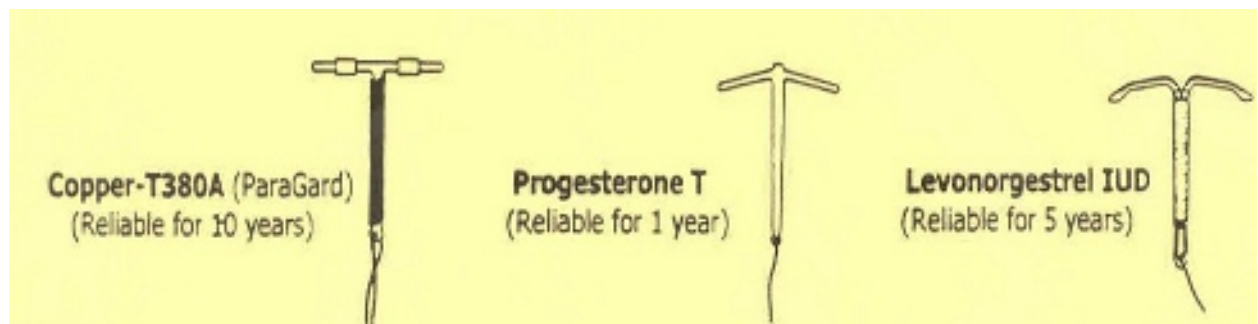
Requires checking the IUD's "strings" monthly

Possible perforation of the uterus at the time of insertion (very rare)

Cannot be used in women with impaired response to infections or who has an abnormal

uterus

EXAMPLES OF IUDS:



WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE IUD USER?

1. CHECK YOUR STRINGS. Once the IUD is inserted and before you leave the clinic, learn how to feel the strings that protrude about 1 inch or so into the vagina. The strings should be checked after each menstrual period. If you cannot feel the strings or if you can feel the plastic part, your IUD may not be effective in preventing pregnancy. Notify your health care provider immediately.

2. BE ALERT FOR SIGNS OF INFECTION. Know the IUD warning signs. If a woman with an IUD gets a pelvic infection it can be very serious. If you develop fever, chills, unusual vaginal bleeding, abnormal vaginal discharge, pain with sex, abdominal pain, or severe cramping contact your health care provider immediately.

3. KEEP TRACK OF YOUR MENSTRUAL PERIODS. An increase in the menstrual flow is normal for the first 2-3 months after an IUD is inserted. Some women experience more spotting and bleeding with an IUD. Although uncommon, pregnancies can occur with IUDs in place. If you miss your menstrual ~ period, contact your health care provider for a pregnancy test. If you become pregnant with an IUD, the IUD needs to be removed as soon as possible.

4. DO NOT TRY TO REMOVE THE IUD YOURSELF. If you experience problems or can feel the plastic portion of the IUD, see your health care provider for removal. Do not allow your partner to pull on the strings or try to take the IUD out yourself. To do so may cause serious problems.

5. ASK QUESTIONS. If you have any questions or concerns about the IUD always ask your health care provider. Do not be intimidated or feel your question is silly. Your health care provider is the best source of accurate information. Although friends and family try to be helpful they may have misconceptions or inaccurate information to share.

WHAT ARE IUD WARNING SIGNS THAT MAY INDICATE A SERIOUS PROBLEM?

Period is late, or abnormal bleeding/spotting
Abdominal pain or pain with sex
Infection exposure (any STD) or abnormal discharge
Not feeling well, fever, chills
Strings missing, shorter or longer than usual

USE CONDOMS TO HELP PROTECT YOURSELF FROM SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS INCLUDING HIV / AIDS