



Intrauterine System (IUS) Advice Sheet

What is the IUS?

The intrauterine system (IUS) is a small T-shaped plastic device which slowly releases a low dose of the hormone progestogen into the lining of your womb.

How does the IUS work?

- It makes the lining of your womb thinner so it is less likely to accept a fertilised egg.
- It also thickens the mucus in your cervix which will stop sperm reaching your egg.
- In some women it also stops ovulation.

How effective is the IUS?

The failure rates for the IUS are less than 1% per year.

Advantages of the IUS

- It is extremely effective contraception.
- It works for either 5 years (Mirena or Kyleena) or 3 years (Jaydess) but it can be removed earlier.
- If fitted aged 45 or over in may not need to be changed until after the menopause unless you are using it as part of your HRT.
- Your periods will become much lighter and shorter and they may stop during the first year.
- It doesn't interfere with sex.
- It is not affected by other medicines.
- If required, it can be used as part of your HRT.
- It is immediately reversible when it is removed.

Disadvantages of the IUS

- You will need to have an internal vaginal examination to have it fitted.
- Sometimes you can get irregular light bleeding which usually settles by 3 - 6 months.
- Some women develop small cysts on their ovaries, these usually do not need any treatment but some women may have some pelvic pain.
- It does not protect you from sexually transmitted infections (STIs) so you may need to use condoms as well.

Are there any risks?

- If you are at risk of STIs then you may be more at risk of getting a pelvic infection – this is more likely in the first three weeks after the IUS is fitted. To try to prevent this happening we offer a STI screening test to all women prior to the fitting.
- Occasionally, a woman's body might push the IUS out of her womb (expulsion), this is more likely to happen in the first few months after fitting.
- On rare occasions the IUS may go through (perforate) your womb or cervix. Sometimes this causes pain but it may cause no symptoms at all. If this happens then the IUS may have to be removed by surgery.
- If you do become pregnant while you are using an IUS there is a small risk that the pregnancy may be an ectopic pregnancy. However, the risk of an ectopic pregnancy is less in women using an IUS than in women using no contraception.

I've just had a baby. Can I use an IUS?

An IUS is usually fitted from 4 weeks after a vaginal or caesarean delivery. The IUS is safe to use whilst breastfeeding.

Information about your IUS fitting appointment

If you already have an appointment to have an IUS fitted, please read the following advice so that we can successfully fit your IUS on the day of your appointment:

- It is very important that there is no risk that you may be pregnant when the IUS is fitted. Please continue to use your current method of contraception (pills/implant/injection or condoms) until the day of your IUS fitting. We will not be able to fit your IUS if you have had unprotected sex since your last period.
- If your appointment is to have your IUS changed then this can be done at any stage in your cycle but you must abstain or use condoms for 7 days before your appointment.

On the day of the of the IUS fitting please take some painkillers one hour prior to the IUD fit (either paracetamol 2 x 500mg tablets or ibuprofen 2 x 200mg tablets). IUS fitting can affect women in very different ways. Most women will have some discomfort (period-like pain) during the IUD fit.

Please ensure that you have had something to eat and drink before your appointment.

Some women may experience more severe pain and may need to take the rest of the day off work or college to recover. Please do not arrange any important appointments (e.g. an exam or job interview) on the same day as your IUS fit. It is normal to need to take some painkillers (paracetamol or ibuprofen) in the first few days after your IUS fitting; a hot water bottle or heat pad can also be helpful with 'period-like' pains.

The IUS fitting appointment will take approximately 20 minutes, during this time the doctor or nurse will explain everything you need to know about having an IUS. The fitting itself takes about 5 minutes.

Type of Device Fitted.....

Date of Fitting.....

Date replacement or removal due.....

Phoenix Health Group

Cirencester – Tetbury – South Cerney – Kemble – Royal Agricultural University
www.phoenixhealthgroup.co.uk



Post Fitting Advice

How do I check my IUS?

The IUS has two threads attached to it, which hang through the neck of the womb (cervix) into the vagina. You can check that your IUS is in the right position by putting a finger in the vagina to feel the threads from the IUS coming out of the cervix. You should not be able to feel the IUS itself. It is advisable to check your IUS once a month.

Will an IUS affect my periods?

Yes, your periods will become lighter and shorter and may stop altogether, although this can take up to six months. In the first few months you may experience irregular bleeding but it should be lighter than your usual periods. It is common to experience spotting on a daily basis but this usually settles by three to six months.

Can I use tampons?

It is safe to use tampons with an IUS but not for the first 3 days after fitting.

When can I have sex?

The IUS works after 7 days so you must abstain or use condoms for the first week after fitting.

How often do I need to have my IUS checked by a nurse or doctor?

If you have no problems and you can feel your IUS threads then you do not need to have regular IUS checks.

If you have any of the following problems then please contact your GP:

- You cannot feel your IUS threads especially if you usually feel them every month.
- You develop unusual lower abdominal pain.
- You develop an unusual vaginal discharge.
- You feel unwell with a high temperature in the first few weeks after fitting.

Does the IUS protect me from sexually transmitted infections (STIs)?

No, the IUS only protects you from pregnancy. If you want to avoid STIs including chlamydia, gonorrhoea & HIV, it is important to use condoms as well.

Having an IUS removed

An IUS can be removed at any time by a trained nurse or doctor. If you do not want to become pregnant you need to start using an alternative method of contraception 7 days before you have your IUS removed.

Further information on the IUD is available on the website www.fpa.org.uk