

Information for Informed Consent  
INTRAUTERINE CONTRACEPTIVES (IUCs)

**What are intrauterine contraceptives (IUC)?**

IUCs are small, T-shaped pieces of plastic that are put into the uterus. There are 2 types:

- **Copper IUC** has copper. It is good for up to 12 years.
- **Levonorgestrel IUC (LNG IUC)** has a hormone like the progesterone made by your body. LNG IUCs are good for up to 3 or 6 years depending on which one you get.

Both work mainly by affecting the way sperm move so they can't join with an egg. The hormone in the LNG IUC can also work in 2 other ways:

- In some people it keeps eggs from leaving the ovaries
- It makes cervical mucus thicker. This keeps sperm from getting to the eggs.

The copper IUC can also be used as emergency contraception (EC) when put in within 5 days of unprotected sex.

**Before getting an IUC, you need to know the most common benefits, risks, side effects, and other choices you have. We are happy to answer any questions you have.**

**What are the benefits of an IUC?**

- There's nothing you have to do before sex to make the IUC work. Being able to get pregnant comes back quickly after removing the IUC.
- It protects you from
  - Cancer of the uterus
  - Pregnancy in the tubes

**LNG IUC**

- Fewer menstrual cramps
- Lighter periods — often periods stop after a few months
- Less anemia (iron poor blood)

**Copper IUC**

- No hormones
- Can be used for emergency contraception (EC)

**How well does the IUC work?**

For every 100 people who use the IUC, fewer than 1 will get pregnant each year.

**How well does copper IUC work as EC?**

It is the EC that works the best. For every 100 people who use the IUC for EC, fewer than 1 will get pregnant.

**What are the risks of using the IUC?**

- Injury to the uterus (perforation) — The IUC or instruments used to put it in may go through the wall of the uterus. Treatment may mean just watching and waiting for a while or surgery on your belly. There is a small chance that hysterectomy (removal of the uterus) may be needed. Afterwards, scars may develop inside the uterus, which may need to be treated.
- Expulsion — Occasionally, the IUC will slip out of the uterus. You can become pregnant if this happens. The IUC must be removed if it comes out part way.
- Pregnancy — There is a small chance that you could get pregnant. You should see your doctor or nurse right away if this happens. Your IUC needs to be removed. And we need to make sure you do not have a pregnancy in your tubes. This could be life threatening.
- Infection of the uterus — Most infections can be treated with medicines.

**What are the side effects of the IUC? — You may have**

- Mild to moderate pain when the IUC is put in
- Cramping or backache for a few days
- Irregular periods or spotting between periods in the first 3 –6 months
- Heavier periods and worse menstrual cramps with copper IUC

**Besides an IUC, what other choices do I have for birth control?**

There are many other methods of birth control. We can talk about any of these options with you and help you with whatever you decide to do.

**What about other methods of EC?**

There are EC pills such as levonorgestrel EC (LNG EC) and ulipristal acetate (UPA) that you can use. You can also choose to wait and see if you become pregnant. We are happy to discuss all your options with you.

**Can I use the IUC?**

People with certain health problems can't use the IUC. Talk with your doctor or nurse about your risks and health problems. It will help you to decide if the IUC is right for you.

**How is the IUC put in?**

You will lie on your back as you would for a Pap test. We will put a speculum in your vagina. Your doctor or nurse will hold your cervix with an instrument. The IUC will be put into the opening in your cervix and into the uterus. You may feel cramping. Plastic strings will hang down into your vagina.

Before the IUC is put in, you may be offered medicine to help open your cervix. You may also be given medicine to numb the cervix.

**How is the IUC taken out?**

Having your IUC taken out or replaced is usually very simple. Your doctor or nurse will do it for you by gently pulling on the IUC strings. Rarely, if the IUC doesn't come out easily, a small instrument may be needed to take out your IUC. Very rarely, surgery may be needed.

**What else do I need to know?**

- Read the package insert that comes with it. The information may be different from ours. Let us know if you have questions.
- You can check the string to make sure that the IUC is in place. Ask your doctor or nurse how.
- The IUC does not protect you from sexually transmitted infections.

No promise can be made about the outcome of putting in your IUC. In the unlikely event that you need emergency medical care that cannot be provided at Planned Parenthood, you will be responsible for paying for it. This is the case even if Planned Parenthood sends you to a hospital because of a problem.

**Call us right away if you have**

- Fever of 100.4°F or higher
- Belly pain or cramps that don't get better with pain medicine
- Heavy bleeding or bleeding lasts for more than a week
- A bad smelling vaginal discharge
- Ongoing pain or bleeding with intercourse
- Notice any change in the length of the string or can feel part of the IUC
- Symptoms of pregnancy

**Your health is important to us.** If you have any questions or concerns, please call us. We are happy to help you.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Patient (and person authorized to sign for patient when required)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

Relationship to Patient:  self  parent  legal guardian  other \_\_\_\_\_

I witness that the patient received this information, said it was read and understood, and there was an opportunity to ask questions.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Witness

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date