

How to use the Copper IUD (Copper Coil)

Information for patients

An IUD (intrauterine device) can be fitted as soon as your procedure is complete. It can be inserted during a surgical procedure, immediately after most medical procedures in hospital or between 1-2 weeks after a medical procedure at home. The clinic/ward staff will arrange for a 'Fast track' appointment to a Sexual Health clinic for your IUD fitting after your medical procedure.

We ask that you visit the Chalmers Sexual Health website www.lothiansexualhealth.scot.nhs.uk and watch a short video regarding the IUD before you attend your appointment. Follow the links from the home page → Contraception → The Coil/IUD or scan this QR code.



The IUD is used by more than a million women in this country and most of them find it a very satisfactory method of contraception. It is a method of contraception that does not have any hormones. Before you make your decision, please read the following information about issues that may arise.

Protection against pregnancy

The IUD is a very effective method of contraception. There are two types of IUD - one that lasts for 5 years and one that lasts for 10. They are both more reliable than taking the contraceptive pill and are more effective than using condoms. Once inserted, the IUD is effective straight away.

Effect on menstrual periods

Menstrual periods are slightly longer and heavier, but this is generally not a problem for women whose periods are normal. If you already have heavy or painful periods, you might be suitable for the hormone-releasing IUS. Most women find that it takes a few months for the IUD to settle down after it has been inserted.

If you become pregnant with an IUD

If you become pregnant with the IUD in the womb, there is a possible increased risk of ectopic pregnancy. The chance of having an ectopic pregnancy (pregnancy outwith the womb) with the IUD is overall lower than if you did not use contraception (because the IUD is so effective) but if you become pregnant with an IUD, half of these small number of pregnancies would be ectopic. If you have an IUD and your period is late, you should attend your GP or sexual health clinic. **This is particularly important if you also have abdominal pain.**

Other issues

- Having an IUD inserted is generally a moderately uncomfortable but quick procedure. Discuss this with the nurse or doctor if you are worried.
- Occasionally an IUD can fall out. This is more likely to happen in the first 3 months after insertion (risk is 1:20). The nurse will teach you how to check for the small threads in your vagina. Neither you nor your partner will be aware of the threads during sexual intercourse.
- There is a very rare possibility that the womb will be perforated during the insertion procedure (up to 2 in 1000).

Safer sex

The IUD does not protect you from sexually transmitted infection. Use condoms with new partners and test regularly.

If you have any problems, do not hesitate to contact us.

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