

The Hormone-based IUC

INTRAUTERINE CONTRACEPTIVE DEVICE

What is it?

The IUC is made up of a small T-shaped frame with a small cylinder containing the hormone levonorgestrel (progestin). This cylinder slowly releases the hormone that acts on the lining of the uterus. The lining of the uterus becomes thinner and the cervical mucus becomes thicker which makes it more difficult for sperm to enter the uterus.



Benefits

The hormonal intrauterine contraceptive (IUC) provides reliable, reversible contraception for up to five years. This method of contraception is more than 99% effective in preventing unwanted pregnancy.

If your hormonal IUC is inserted on:

- day 1 to 7 of your period, it works right away to prevent pregnancy
- any other day, you need an extra form of birth control (e.g., condoms, abstinence) for 7 days

The IUC does not contain estrogen so it can be used in women who cannot take, or have sensitivities to estrogen. Unlike the copper intrauterine device, the hormonal IUC can be used to treat heavy menstrual bleeding and can help decrease menstrual cramping.

Disadvantages

- The hormonal IUC does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or HIV. Condoms should be used to protect against STIs or HIV.
- Complications associated with the insertion of IUCs are rare but may occur. Possible complications include:
 - perforation of the uterus (a small hole forms in the uterus), 1 out of 1000 insertions
 - infection, 1.6 out of 1000 insertions
 - expulsion (the IUC falls out), 2-10% of insertions

Side-effects

- Irregular bleeding or spotting. This is most common within the first 3 months following insertion. It usually improves with time.
- Most women that use a hormonal IUC notice that their periods are less heavy.
- No periods (amenorrhea). Of women that are using the hormonal IUC, 20% will stop having periods. Not having a period does not necessarily mean that you are pregnant, it may just be a side effect of the IUC.

The hormonal IUD may be a good choice for you if:

- You are at low risk for contracting a sexually transmitted infection (STI)
- You are looking for a long-term, reliable method of contraception
- You have had failure with other methods in the past (you have trouble remembering to take the pill)
- You are breastfeeding (it has no effect on breast milk)
- You have completed your family but do not want a tubal ligation
- You have heavy or painful menstruations



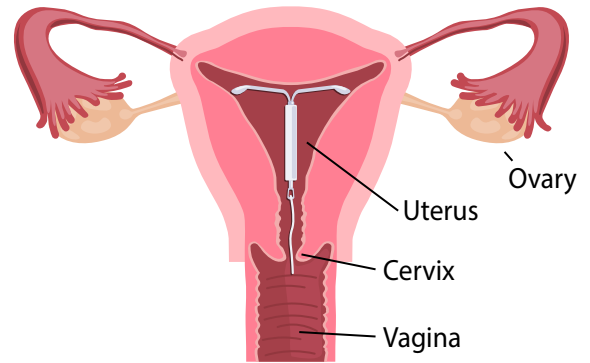
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Steps to getting an IUC

You will need a prescription from your healthcare provider to get an IUC from the pharmacy. A health care provider must insert the IUC.

On the day of the procedure, a health care provider will insert the IUC into the uterus through the cervix (opening of the uterus).

If you already have an IUC inserted, it can be removed and a new one inserted on the same day. It takes only a few minutes to insert an IUC. You may feel some cramping pain when the IUC is being inserted.



On the day of the procedure

A few things to remember:

1. It is a good idea to take **Advil 800mg** by mouth, 1 hour prior to the insertion. If you can't take Advil, you can take Tylenol 1000mg instead.
2. **Arrive to your appointment 15 minutes before the scheduled time**, as you will be asked to provide a urine sample to ensure that you are not pregnant.
3. A pelvic exam will be performed; samples for chlamydia, gonorrhea, and pap test will be taken.
4. After the insertion there can be some bleeding. **Bring a sanitary napkin (pad)** to your appointment. **No tampons or menstrual cups.**
5. It is important that for 24 hours after the IUC insertion: no tampons, no menstrual cups, no fingers, and no penis, are inserted in the vagina.
6. You will be encouraged to check the IUC strings from time to time to make sure that the IUC is still in the uterus. You can do this by putting a finger inside the vagina and feeling for the strings near the cervix. Note that sometimes this might not be possible due to variations in each person's anatomy.
7. **In the event of fever, heavy vaginal bleeding, or severe pelvic cramping, go to the nearest Emergency Department.**

Clinic location

The appointment will take place at:

The Montfort Academic Family Health Team
745 Montreal Rd., suite 101B
Phone: 613-749-4429

*The clinic is in the white building, located in front of the Montfort Hospital. Use **ENTRANCE B** and go through the door directly in front of the entrance, to find the waiting area and reception desk.*



Follow-up

Please schedule an appointment with your doctor for 8 weeks after the IUC insertion, to check the strings and make sure the IUC is in place.

You should contact your health care provider if any of the following occur:

- You cannot feel the IUC threads
- You think you are pregnant
- You or your partner feel pain or discomfort during intercourse
- You wish to have the device removed, or you want to get pregnant

