

The Intrauterine System

**IUS - long acting, reversible and reliable
contraception**

A service provided by

Sheffield Teaching Hospitals 

NHS Foundation Trust

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).
- 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.

Disadvantages of the IUS

- You will need to have an internal vaginal examination to have it fitted.
- Sometimes you can get irregular light bleeding in the first few months, this usually settles by 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.

How do I get an IUS?

Ask the nurse or doctor in clinic and they will talk to you about the advantages and disadvantages of having an IUS and they will offer you an STI screening test or telephone for an IUS fitting appointment.

Information about your IUD/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 IUD/IUS is fitted. Please continue to use your current method of contraception (pills/implant/injection or condoms) until the day of your IUD/IUS fitting and do not have unprotected sex prior to the fit.
- If you are at risk of a sexually transmitted infection (STI) then it is important to have a clear STI screen prior to your IUD/IUS fitting appointment. You may be at risk if you have had:
 - a new sexual partner in the last three months
 - more than one sexual partner in the last one year

You can easily arrange for an STI screen by coming into clinic to do a self-service screen or by visiting your GP or by ordering a postal kit from our website or text service

(www.sexualhealthsheffield.nhs.uk/services/chlamydia-screening/request-a-testing-kit). We routinely test everyone who is at low risk for an STI on the day of the IUD/IUD fitting.

On the day of the of the IUD/IUS fitting

Please take some painkillers one hour prior to the IUD/IUS fit (either paracetamol 2 x 500mg tablets or ibuprofen 2 x 200mg tablets). IUD/IUS fitting can affect women in very different ways. Most women will have some discomfort (period-like pain) during the IUD/IUS fit. 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 after your IUD/IUS fit. It is normal to need to take some regular painkillers (paracetamol or ibuprofen) in the first few days after your IUD/IUS fitting; a hot water bottle or heat pad can also be helpful with 'period-like' pains.

The IUD/IUS fitting appointment will take approximately 30 minutes, during this time the Doctor or Nurse will explain everything you need to know about having an IUD or IUS. The fitting itself takes about 5 minutes.

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.

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.

Will an IUS affect my periods?

Yes, your periods will become lighter and shorter and may stop altogether. In the first few months you may experience irregular bleeding but it should be lighter than your usual periods.

Can I use tampons?

It is safe to use tampons with an IUS but it is better to use pads when the bleeding is only light. It is not advisable to use a Mooncup with an IUS as there is a higher risk of expulsion.

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, ask the clinic nurse or doctor for advice about this.

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 attend either your GP or the walk-in clinic for an urgent appointment:

- 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.

Emergency Contraception

An IUS cannot be used as emergency contraception. An IUD (Intrauterine Device) can be used as emergency contraception.

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.

Condoms are available free from the Sexual Health Clinic.

What happens at Sexual Health Sheffield?

When you attend for your appointment, you will be asked to provide the following:

- Your name and how we can contact you - any details you provide will be treated confidentially
- During your visit you will be asked personal information so we can provide the relevant and appropriate care
- We have a duty of care to all our patients, so if you are 17 or under you will be asked relevant questions to assess your safety. If staff are concerned, they may talk to you about what to do about this and may contact other appropriate agencies. Sexual Health Sheffield will not tell your parents or carers that you have visited Sexual Health Sheffield

This is the service you can expect when you attend Sexual Health Sheffield:

- All advice, information, tests, contraception, condoms and treatments are free at Sexual Health Sheffield
- No one should judge you because of your sexual behaviour or lifestyle
- All our services are confidential
- All Sexual Health Sheffield workers are appropriately and fully trained NHS staff
- All tests are optional; no examination will take place without your permission
- Please ask questions to ensure you fully understand what services have been offered, what tests carried out and what treatments given
- You can have a chaperone to help you feel more comfortable – please ask
- Our friendly & professional staff are here to help you. We will give you as much support as you need (particularly if you need help on how to inform any partners)

If you feel that we have not met the above or want to give us any other feedback, please contact us via www.sth.nhs.uk/patients/tell-us-what-you-think

Sexual Health Sheffield

Visit Sexual Health Sheffield's website for opening times.

www.sexualhealthsheffield.nhs.uk

0114 226 8888

Your IUS

Fitting appointment:

Date: Time:

Clinician:

Please note: Some of our clinicians are male doctors or nurses please let us know when we book your appointment if you would prefer to have a female clinician. Sexual Health Sheffield also has trained chaperones - please ask if you would like a chaperone to be present.

Sometimes there may be a trainee in clinic fitting your IUS. All trainees are closely supervised by experienced doctors.

IUS expiry date:



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