

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

Your IUD will be checked 6 weeks after being fitted. If you have no problems and you can feel your IUD threads then you do not need to have regular IUD 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 IUD threads especially if you usually feel them every month
- ❖ You feel unwell with a high temperature in the first few weeks after fitting.
- ❖ You develop unusual lower abdominal pain
- ❖ You miss a period
- ❖ You have bleeding in between your periods
- ❖ You develop an unusual vaginal discharge.

## Emergency Contraception

An IUD is extremely effective as emergency contraception if it is fitted within 5 days of having sex or within 5 days of the expected release of an egg (ovulation).

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

No, the IUD 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 clinic**

# Your IUD

## Fitting Appointment Date + Time:

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## Clinician.....

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.

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

## Type of IUD.....

## Expiry Date.....

## IUD Check Date + Time:

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## Sexual Health Sheffield

There are two sexual health clinics in Sheffield where you can get the IUD. Check our website for opening times.

[www.sheffieldsexualhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.sheffieldsexualhealth.nhs.uk)

**Central Clinic Tel: 0114 305 4000**

**Hallamshire Clinic Tel: 0114 276 6928**

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# The Intrauterine Device (IUD or “Coil”)

## The Copper Coil – long acting, reversible and reliable contraception

## This leaflet explains all about the IUD:

### What is the IUD?

The IUD is a small T-shaped plastic and copper device which is put into your womb.

### How does the IUD work?

- ❖ The main way it works is to stop sperm reaching the egg.
- ❖ It may also stop a fertilised egg from settling in the womb.

### How effective is the IUD?

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

### Advantages of the IUD

- ❖ It is extremely effective contraception.
- ❖ It is long acting and works for 5 - 10 years, depending on type, but can be removed earlier.
- ❖ It starts working immediately but is immediately reversible when it is removed.
- ❖ It doesn't interfere with sex.
- ❖ It is not affected by other medicines.

### **Disadvantages of the IUD**

- ❖ At first your periods may be heavier, longer or more painful. This usually improves after a few months.
- ❖ You will need to have an internal vaginal examination to have the IUD fitted.
- ❖ 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 IUD is fitted. To try to prevent this happening we offer a test for Chlamydia to all women prior to the fitting.
- ❖ Occasionally, a woman's body might push the IUD out of her womb (expulsion) this is more likely to happen in the first few months after fitting.
- ❖ On rare occasions the IUD 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 IUD may have to be removed by surgery.
- ❖ If you do become pregnant while you are using an IUD 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 IUD than in women using no contraception.

### **How do I get an IUD?**

Ask the nurse or doctor in clinic and they will talk to you about the advantages and disadvantages of having an IUD and they will offer you a test for Chlamydia.

### **How is an IUD fitted?**

- ❖ An IUD is fitted inside the uterus (womb). The nurse or doctor will examine you internally to check the size of your womb before they fit the IUD.
- ❖ The fitting usually takes between 15 to 20 minutes.
- ❖ On the day of your fitting appointment please have something to eat and one hour before take a dose of a mild painkiller (paracetamol or ibuprofen).

### **After the IUD fitting**

- ❖ After the fitting you may get some period type pain and some light bleeding for a few days. It is a good idea to take a mild painkiller (paracetamol or ibuprofen) to help with this.
- ❖ You will be advised to return for a check-up 6 weeks after your IUD fitting.
- ❖ If you have any problems or feel unwell (with pain or discharge from your vagina) then please attend your GP or the drop in clinic to be seen more urgently.

### **How do I check my IUD?**

Each IUD has one or two threads attached to it, which hang through the neck of the womb (cervix) into the vagina. You can check that your IUD is in the right position by putting a finger in the vagina to feel the IUD threads coming out of the cervix. You should not be able to feel the IUD itself. It is advisable to check your IUD in this way once a month, ideally just after your period finishes.

### **I've just had a baby. Can I use an IUD?**

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

### **Will an IUD affect my periods?**

Your periods may become longer or heavier and you may have spotting (light bleeding between periods) in the first 6 months after an IUD is fitted. It is safe to use tampons with an IUD, but better to use pads when your bleeding is light.

If you have heavy or long periods you may wish to consider a hormone releasing IUS (called an intrauterine system or Mirena).

### **Having an IUD removed**

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