

This leaflet explains all about the IUD. The Copper coil – long acting, reversible and reliable contraception.

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 fertilized egg from settling in the womb.

How effective is the IUD?

The failure rates for IUD 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 and fertility returns immediately when removed. It doesn't interfere with sex.
- It doesn't interfere with 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

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 3-6 weeks after the IUD is fitted. To try to prevent this happening we offer a test for Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea to all women prior to the fitting.

Occasionally, a women'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 and Gonorrhoea.

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.

If you have any problems or feel unwell (with pain or discharge from your vagina) then please seek medical attention.

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 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.

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

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 alternative method of contraception 7 days before you have your IUD removed, ask the clinic nurse or doctor for advice about this

Do I need to have my IUS checked by a nurse or doctor?

No. 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 our clinic, your GP or Rotherham Urgent and Emergency care centre 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 first few weeks after fitting.
- 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.

This information should not replace the information that accompanies your IUD which will be given to you after the fitting.

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

Need further help/advice?

Please make an appointment for one of our clinics.

The Department of Integrated Sexual Health Rotherham Hospital

Moorgate Road
Rotherham

S60 2UD

Telephone 01709 427777

If you need help/advice outside these hours, please contact your GP or go to the Rotherham Urgent and Emergency Care Centre