

INTRAUTERINE DEVICE (IUD)

What is it?

The IUD is a long-lasting method of birth control that is inserted into the uterus. It is a T-shaped plastic frame that is surrounded by a thin copper wire. At the bottom of the IUD is a string.

How does it work?

- Makes the lining of the uterus not ideal for a pregnancy
- Copper in the IUD causes changes in the uterus which destroys sperm

Advantages

- Can remain in the uterus for three to ten years depending on which IUD is put in
- No daily routine required
- Does not contain hormones
- Fine to use during breastfeeding
- Does not interfere with sex
- Can be used as a form of emergency contraceptive up to 5 days

Considerations

- May have irregular bleeding and spotting after insertion
- Cramping and menstrual flow may increase
- Small number of users will have their IUD come out on its own
- Does not protect against Sexually Transmitted Infections

How to use an IUD

- Must be inserted and removed by a trained health care professional
- Long acting can remain in the uterus for up to 10 years

Typical Effectiveness Rate

- 99% effective

Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) Protection

The IUD does not protect against STIs. Use a separate condom, dental dam, latex glove for each sex act.

Reference:

The Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
www.sexandu.ca

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