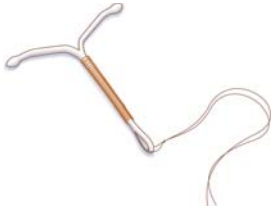


INTRAUTERINE DEVICE (IUD) (non-hormonal IUD)

What is it?



An IUD is a small plastic and copper shaped “t” that fits inside the uterus. The IUD has thin plastic strings attached to it, which hang through the cervix into the vagina. The strings are approximately 2.5-5 centimeters long. All IUDs must be inserted and removed by a doctor. IUDs medicated with the hormone progesterone are also available. The IUD is 99.2-99.9% effective.

How does it work?

The exact way an IUD works is not completely understood. The IUD may work by slowing the sperm as they move toward the egg, therefore preventing fertilization. The IUD may also change the lining of the uterus so that the fertilized egg does not attach to the uterine wall. The IUD can stay in the uterus an average of 2-5 years, based on the package instructions.

Who should not use an IUD?

Women with the following should not use an IUD:

- pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) or recent PID (within last 3 months)
- recent (within last 3 months) or recurrent sexually transmitted infections (STIs)
- pregnancy or suspected pregnancy
- undiagnosed or irregular uterine bleeding
- abnormal Pap or possibility of uterine cancer
- anemia or bleeding disorders
- HIV/AIDS –discussion with your specialist is recommended

What are the side effects and complications?

- longer and heavier periods with more cramps (this may lessen over time)
- the IUD might move or come out (2-10% of IUD users found that the IUD had slipped out of their uterus within the 1st year of use).
- spotting or bleeding between periods

- a slightly higher risk of PID during the first 3 weeks after IUD insertion. The chance of PID increases if you or your partner has other partners.
- damage to the uterus at the time when the IUD is being put in (rare)

Before having an IUD inserted:

- get tested for STIs
- ask the doctor about taking an over-the-counter medication such as ibuprofen 1/2 hour before having the IUD inserted to lessen any discomfort

Instructions following insertion:

- no sexual intercourse or use of tampons for 3 days after insertion of IUD
- be aware of missed periods or extreme bleeding
- eat iron rich food
- do not try to remove the IUD yourself
- learn and pay attention to the signs of infection

Checking for IUD strings:

The doctor will tell you when to check inside the vagina to see if the strings can still be felt.

If the IUD has moved, you may notice:

- unusual vaginal discharge
 - cramping or pain
 - spotting between periods or after intercourse
 - painful sex for male or female (can feel the IUD in the vagina)
 - strings are either missing, shorter or longer
- A missed period may be the first sign of pregnancy because the IUD has moved or come out.

Signs of infection:

- abnormal spotting or bleeding
- pain with intercourse
- unusual discharge or odour
- fever, dizziness, and chills

If you notice any of the above signs see your doctor.

For more information call Peel Public Health 905-799-7700

and ask for Sexual Health Information

or visit

peelsexualhealth.ca

intheknowpeel.ca

peelregion.ca/health