

All About IUDs



Family PACT

The intrauterine device (IUD) is placed in the uterus. This helps prevent pregnancy.

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IUDs have a plastic frame with copper or a hormone to make them work. The IUD keeps the sperm from meeting the egg. Once it is in place, you don't have to think about birth control every day.



What the IUD looks like

There are two kinds of IUDs.

Both kinds work well for people of all ages. Talk to your Family PACT provider about which IUD would be best for you.

- ◆ The hormone IUD works for up to **3, 5, 6 or 7 years**, depending on the type of IUD. After a few months, people have lighter and fewer periods and less cramping. Periods may even stop.
- ◆ The copper IUD works for up to **10 years**. It has no hormones and few side effects. Periods will continue.

How well does the IUD work?

The IUD works well to prevent pregnancy. Fewer than 1 out of 100 people who use an IUD for one year will get pregnant.

How do I get an IUD?

Your Family PACT provider can place an IUD any time of the month. They can even place it when you are on your period.

What do people like about using the IUD?

- ◆ You don't have to do anything else to prevent pregnancy for years at a time.
- ◆ You can use this method without others knowing it.
- ◆ Some people like that the copper IUD has no hormones. Others like the lighter periods they have with the hormone IUD.

What do some people dislike?

- ◆ For a short while after it is put in, some people have side effects. For example, some people have cramping, bleeding, or backache.
- ◆ The copper IUD may cause more bleeding and cramping during your period. This happens especially in the first few months.



This IUD is placed in the uterus.

The IUD may not be safe for some people.

Talk to your Family PACT provider about any health problems you may have. For example:

- ◆ If you have had pelvic inflammatory disease (PID). This is an infection of the uterus or tubes.
- ◆ If you have vaginal bleeding for no known reason.
- ◆ If you could be pregnant.
- ◆ If you have had cancer of the cervix or breast.

How is the IUD placed?

During a pelvic exam, a clinician uses a thin plastic tube to slip the IUD into your uterus.

- ◆ It takes just a few minutes.
- ◆ When it is put in, you may feel discomfort or cramps for a short while.

Here are some helpful tips.

Was the IUD put in more than 7 days after your period?

- ◆ With the hormone IUD, you need to use a birth control method for the first 7 days.
- ◆ The copper IUD helps prevent pregnancy right away. You don't need another method.

There will be two plastic threads that you can feel.

- ◆ Check the threads each month to make sure the IUD is in place.
- ◆ If you have a heavy period, check to make sure you can feel the threads.
- ◆ To feel the threads, put your finger into your vagina as far as you can.

If you have any problems with the IUD, talk with your provider. You can have the IUD taken out at any time and for any reason.

Take care of yourself afterwards.

- ◆ Some people have dizziness or cramps right after the IUD placement. This is normal. Your provider may offer you pain medication. They may offer you ibuprofen or naproxen.
- ◆ You may have some spotting the first day or so.
- ◆ For the first 24 hours, make sure you do NOT put anything in your vagina. Don't have sex. Do not use a tampon or put your finger inside.
- ◆ Call your provider right away if you have abdominal pain, fever, or chills.

Are there problems with using it?

IUDs are safe for most people to use. Besides changes to your periods, there are few possible problems.

- ◆ The IUD won't stay in the uterus after it is placed there.
- ◆ The hormone IUD may cause acne, headaches, mood changes, or tender breasts. These problems may last for up to 6 months.

Watch for these warning signs.

Call your provider right away if:

- ◆ The threads feel longer or shorter, or you can't feel them at all.
- ◆ You can feel part of the IUD coming through your cervix.
- ◆ You have pain or bleeding with sex.
- ◆ You think you might be pregnant.
- ◆ You have cramping or heavy bleeding.

The IUD does not protect you from HIV (the virus that causes AIDS) or other infections that people get from having sex.

Use condoms when you have sex to protect yourself from these infections.