IUD Information Sheet

What It Is
Intrauterine device or IUD is a small, flexible “T” shaped plastic device. It is considered to be a form of LARC (long-acting reversible contraception). There are two types of IUD’s available. The Mirena, which contains the progestin hormone, is effective for 5 years. The ParaGard, which is hormone free and contains copper, is effective for 10 years.

How It Works
The progestin hormone in the Mirena works to suppress an egg from being released every month. It also works by thickening cervical mucous to prevent sperm from making its way through the cervix into the uterus. The ParaGard works by interfering with how the sperm travel making it less motile and thus not allowing it to join with the egg.

Effectiveness
The IUD is one of the most effective forms of birth control available as long as it is inserted at the appropriate time and correctly.

Ideal Candidates For An IUD
- Breastfeeding women
- Smokers over the age of 35
- Women with migraine headaches
- Women with high blood pressure
- Women who can’t take estrogen
- Women who would like a long acting reversible form of contraception
- Women who have problems remembering to use other birth control methods
- Women who don’t want to use any birth control method which contains hormones
- Women who are in a mutually monogamous relationship

Who An IUD Is Not Appropriate For
- If you think you may be pregnant
- Have history of blood clots in legs, lungs, heart or head
- Unexplained vaginal bleeding
- Liver disease (Mirena only)
- Breast cancer (Mirena only)
- Allergy to any product in the Mirena or ParaGard (copper)
- Uterine cancer
- Cervical cancer
- Those with multiple partners without consistent condom use
- Sexually Transmitted Infection or other pelvic infection
• Any pelvic infection following childbirth or an abortion in the past 3 months

**Benefits**

• Over 99% effective
• IUD is not visible and doesn’t interfere with being spontaneous, it’s private
• No need to remember daily, weekly, or monthly birth control
• Effective for 5 or 10 years
• Easily reversible with rapid return of fertility
• No changes in hormone levels (ParaGard)
• May reduce or stop menstrual flow and cramping (Mirena)

**Risks Associated With An IUD**

1. Insertion and/or removal complications
   - Uterine perforation
   - Vaso-vagal response
   - Infection
   - Insertion difficulties
   - Rejection/expulsion of the device
2. Pregnancy
3. Possible spontaneous abortion if pregnancy occurred
4. Pelvic inflammatory disease
5. STIs

**Side Effects**

• Irregular and unpredictable bleeding – the most common side effect is a change in your period pattern. The bleeding pattern may be heavy or light with short or long episodes of bleeding. You could also potentially stop bleeding altogether. Time between periods may vary from month to month and spotting can occur between periods.
• Mood swings
• Headaches
• Acne

**IUD Insertion**

1. Before any IUD insertion, you must have a pap smear and STI testing done and results known. If any positive results are obtained, treatment will be necessary prior to the insertion. It is very important for you to be open and honest when discussing your past sexual history/STI exposure to be sure an IUD is the best option for you.
2. Typical insertion will be done while you are having your period. This allows for easier insertion as the cervix is naturally dilated during menstruation.
3. Discomfort may be like feeling a “pinch” and a pulling or tugging and some minor cramping.
4. The health care provider will verify placement and cut the strings to the appropriate length.
IUD Removal

1. Removal must be no later than 5 years (Mirena) and 10 years (ParaGard) after the insertion date.
2. It is removed in the office during a minor procedure much like the insertion.
3. A plan should be set for a new birth control method when the removal takes place.
   If the plan is for pregnancy, the return of fertility can be rather quick.

* Final Note: An IUD provides no protection from Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs). If you are intimate with more than one long-term partner, it is important to share this with your health care provider. An IUD may not be your best option for birth control because you are at an increased risk for serious pelvic infections relating to STIs. ALWAYS use a condom, male or female, to reduce your risk of being exposed to a STI.