

## Intrauterine Device (IUD)

### What is it?

A small plastic T-shaped device, measuring 3 cm, inserted into the uterus by a doctor to prevent pregnancy.



### Is it effective?

The IUD is the most effective contraceptive method, after sterilization.

### Can I have an IUD installed even though I have not had children?

Yes, the IUD is appropriate for women who have never had children.

### Before insertion...

It is highly recommended to use condoms between the time of your menstrual period and the IUD insertion.

Every woman must have vaginal swabs (screening for sexually transmitted infections, STIs) and have obtained the results prior to insertion.

### The insertion...



A urine pregnancy test will be done on the day of IUD insertion.

The IUD insertion requires only a few minutes. No anesthesia will be used. Dizziness, cramping and light bleeding may occur during and after insertion. Bring some panty liners.

Do not put anything into the vagina (tampons, sexual intercourse) during the three days following the insertion.

### Will I feel my IUD?

No, it is impossible to "feel" the IUD because it is placed in the uterus and not in the vagina. However, most patients or their partners may feel or touch the strings in their vagina.

### Can I use tampons?

Yes, you can use tampons with an IUD in place, but not in the three days following insertion.

### How to choose my IUD?

There are two types of IUDs. A nurse or your doctor can help you make the right choice.

	Copper	Hormonal
Commercial names	Nova-T - Flexi-T – Liberté Mona Lisa	Mirena
How does it work ?	Copper inactivates sperm, and prevents them from reaching the egg.  Copper also changes the lining of the uterus, making the implantation of a fertilized egg less likely.	Progesterone thickens, cervical mucus thus preventing sperm from entering the uterus.  Progesterone also thins the lining of the uterus to prevent implantation of an egg.
Efficiency	99.6%	99.8%
Stays in place	between 3 and 5 years	5 years
Costs	Varies between \$60 and \$200	Varies between \$300 and \$350
Benefits	No hormones.  A good choice for women who have side effects from of contraindications to hormones.	Reduces the length and flow of menstrual bleeds, and may even lead to amenorrhea (total absence of menstrual periods).  A good choice for women who suffer from anemia.
Side effects	May make menstrual bleeds heavier or more painful.  Is not recommended for women who suffer from anemia.	Possibility of irregular menstrual bleeding.  Possibility of adverse effects associated with progesterone (headache, breast pain, acne, depression, nausea, decreased libido).  Possibility of developing ovarian cysts (12%) that can cause pain.
Can be used as emergency contraception?	Yes, up to five days following unprotected sex	No
Can be used by nursing mothers?	Yes	Yes

### Does the IUD protect against STIs?

No, the IUD does not protect against STIs. It is always advisable to use condoms if you are not in a stable relationship.

### Is it immediately effective?

You are immediately protected against pregnancy if the IUD is placed within five days following the first day of your period or if you used another hormonal method of contraception until the day of insertion.

### What are the risks?

- There is a small risk of perforation of the uterus at the time of insertion (in about 1 in 1000 women).
- There is a possibility of infection in the first month following insertion.
- There is a chance of spontaneous expulsion (<3%) during the first year of use. If the IUD falls out, you have to put in another.
- If an STI is contracted while the IUD is in place, the risk of complications, including having a pelvic infection, is increased. Untreated pelvic infection can lead to infertility.
- There is a very small possibility of getting pregnant with an IUD. If this happens, the chances of having an ectopic pregnancy or complications are increased.

### Follow up

It is important to see your doctor 4 to 6 weeks after insertion to discuss side effects and check your IUD placement.

### What if I want to become pregnant?

The IUD can be removed at any time by a doctor. You can try to become pregnant immediately afterwards.

### Contact your doctor if...

- You have heavy bleeding or cramps that last three weeks after insertion of the IUD.
- You have persistent fever or foul smelling yellow vaginal discharge.
- You feel pain during intercourse.
- You think your IUD had fallen out.
- You think you're pregnant.
- You no longer feel the strings.
- You have persistent headaches or severe migraines.

