

# fact sheet

## The IUD

The intrauterine device (IUD) is a small, T-shaped device that is inserted in the uterus to prevent pregnancy. IUDs are very effective and long-lasting forms of reversible birth control. They do NOT protect against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs).

### What are the available IUD options?

	Hormonal	Non-hormonal
Active ingredient	Progestin hormones	Copper
Brands	Mirena, Kyleena, Skyla, Liletta	Paragard
Effective for	3-6 years*	10 years
How it works	Prevents egg release (ovulation)	Causes inflammation in the uterus and kills sperm
When it starts working	Varies**	Immediately
Other considerations	Can cause lighter, more regular periods that may go away after some time	Can be used as emergency contraception if inserted within 5 days of unprotected sex

\*Depends on the specific product

\*\*If the hormonal IUD is inserted within the first 5 days of your period, it starts to work right away. Otherwise you will need to use backup birth control, like a condom, for about a week.

### How effective is it?

When regularly inspected (described below), all forms of IUD are at least 99% effective, making them one of the most reliable forms of birth control available today.

### How do I use it?

IUD insertion requires a visit with a health care provider. One of the benefits of the IUD is that once it's in place, there is little you need to do besides regular inspections. There is a short string attached to the IUD for removal purposes; make sure you can feel it with your fingers about once a month after periods. Also make sure you see your provider at least once a year to make sure that the IUD hasn't shifted.

### What should I do if I think the IUD is moving or coming out?

Movement is extremely rare. If it does happen, it is most likely to happen during the first few weeks of insertion. In very rare cases, the IUD may fall out of the uterus completely or partially. If you suspect one of these events, do not try to fix it on your own. See your provider immediately.

### What are the downsides and side effects of IUDs?

Insertion, regular check-ups, and removal of the IUD can be painful experiences. A common side effect of the copper IUD is heavier and more painful periods, but the hormonal IUD can make them lighter and even go away after some time. In very rare cases, injury to the uterus can happen from either IUD.

### What if I want to get pregnant soon?

The IUD does not permanently affect your chances of getting pregnant. If you are ready to become pregnant, see your provider to have the IUD removed. Do not attempt to remove it yourself. It is possible to get pregnant soon after the IUD is removed.