

WHAT IS IT?

The intrauterine device (IUD) provides reliable, reversible contraception for up to five years. This method of hormonal contraception is more than 99% effective in preventing pregnancy.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

The IUD is made up of a small T-shaped frame with a small cylinder containing the hormone levonorgestrel. It does not contain estrogen. This cylinder slowly releases the hormone that acts on the lining of the uterus. The lining of the uterus becomes thinner and the cervical mucus becomes thicker which makes it harder for sperm to enter the uterus.

BENEFITS:

The IUS does not contain estrogen so it can be used in women who cannot take or have a sensitivity to estrogen. The IUS is effective for up to five years. Unlike the copper intra-uterine device (IUD), the IUS decreases the amount of menstrual bleeding and may decrease menstrual cramping.

DISADVANTAGES:

- The hormonal IUD does not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs) or HIV. Condoms should be used to protect against STIs or HIV.
- Complications associated with the IUD are rare but may occur. Possible complications of inserting an IUD include irregular bleeding or spotting, perforating the uterus (making a small hole in the uterus), infection, or expulsion (the IUD falls out).

SIDE EFFECTS:

- Irregular bleeding or spotting. This is most common within the first 3 months following insertion. It usually improves with time.
- Most women that use the IUD notice that their periods are less heavy.
- No periods. Of women that are using the IUD, 20-30% of women will stop having periods. Not having a period does not necessarily mean that you are pregnant but it may just be a side effect of the IUD.

YOU SHOULD CONTACT YOUR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER IF ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OCCUR:

- You cannot feel the IUD threads
- You or your partner can feel the lower end of the IUD
- You think that you are pregnant
- You experience persistent abdominal pain, fever, or unusual vaginal discharge
- You or your partner feel pain or discomfort during intercourse
- You experience a sudden change in her menstrual periods
- You wish to have the device removed or you want to get pregnant