

IUD (intrauterine device) Insertion

What is it ?

An intrauterine device or IUD, is a small T-shaped type of birth control. It is inserted through the vagina and cervix into the uterus. IUDs are inserted in your health provider's office. The IUD is placed in your uterus by your provider to prevent pregnancy or lessen menstrual symptoms such as heavy bleeding or pain. One hour before you come to the office for your IUD insertion, consider taking an over-the-counter pain medicine such as Tylenol® 500mg x 2 or Motrin® 200mg x 3.

How is it placed?

Just like having a gynecological exam, you will lie on your back with your feet on stirrups. A sheet will drape over your body. Your provider will then use a device called a speculum that holds the vagina open. Next, an antiseptic solution will be used to gently clean the vagina and cervix. The IUD will be inserted through the opening of the cervix into the uterus. You will likely feel some cramping when the IUD is inserted. IUDs are about 1¼ inches long. Each IUD has strings attached to the end, so you and your provider can check to make sure the IUD is in place. The strings also makes it easier for the provider to remove the IUD when it is time to take it out. When the device is in place, your provider will cut the strings at the end of the IUD. If you are sexually active, the IUD should be inserted during your period, or when you have not had intercourse for 2 weeks before the IUD insertion, or while you are on reliable form of birth control. After placement bleeding can be very unpredictable. In the first 3 to 6 months your period may be irregular. Your period may be heavier at first and the number of bleeding days may increase. You may have frequent spotting or light bleeding. After your body has adjusted to the IUD. Your period may be shorter and lighter than before or your period may remain irregular or your period may stop altogether.

What are the risks?

Very rarely, a small hole can be made in the uterus when the IUD is inserted (this is called a "perforation"). Also very rarely, it may migrate outside of the uterus. There is also a small risk of IUD expulsion (the uterus pushing the IUD out).

When to call the health care provider: You have abdominal pain that is not relieved with over-the-counter medicine or a heating pad. The pain may or may not come with bleeding or a discharge. You can see or feel that your IUD is out of place. You cannot feel the string attached to the IUD. You are concerned about a possible pregnancy. Your period continues to be heavier than usual. There is pain or vaginal bleeding if you have sexual intercourse.

