

Information for women after fitting of intrauterine contraception (IUC)

We hope that you will be happy with your chosen method. This leaflet discusses what you should expect after the fitting and situations where you should seek help.

Bleeding

You may experience some light vaginal bleeding after the fitting.

If you have had a hormonal IUS fitted.

It is common for irregular and unpredictable light vaginal bleeding to occur, this usually settles within 3 months but occasionally continues for up to 6 months. This almost always settles to light monthly or infrequent bleeding or to no bleeding at all, because over time the hormone in the IUS thins the lining of the womb. This is entirely normal and healthy.

If you have had a copper IUD fitted.

Your periods may be a bit heavier, more painful and longer, sometimes with very light bleeding at the beginning and the end of the period. The first couple of periods after the fitting are usually the most affected, so it is worth giving your periods time to settle. Remember because the contraceptive pill, patch or ring can make periods lighter and shorter so if you are stopping one of these methods the periods will also get heavier. Occasionally the IUD may cause bleeding between your periods, but you should return for a check-up if this continues beyond 3 months.

Pain

You may experience some lower abdominal (tummy) cramping for a few days after the fitting. If you have been given a local anaesthetic you should not notice any increase in pain once its effects wear off. The cramps are often worse if you have not previously been pregnant. Taking regular painkillers can help to relieve these symptoms.

Checking the threads

We recommend that you check after each period (or monthly) for the presence of the threads at the neck of the womb (cervix). If you or your partner cannot feel the threads, or can feel the hard stem of the device, use alternative contraception or avoid sex and return to the clinic as soon as possible.

Using a Mooncup may in some instances cause the IUC to become dislodged, which might increase the chance of failure. If you do use a moon cup you must release the seal between the moon cup and the vaginal walls before removing it and check the threads of the IUC after removing it, further advice at mooncup.co.uk

Having sex

If you had a copper IUD: these are effective as a contraceptive immediately.

If you had a hormonal IUS: If fitted within the first 7 days of the start of your period, it is effective immediately. If fitted at other times, it becomes effective 7 days after fitting. If you have been using alternative contraception before fitting, you may have been advised to continue with this, or use condoms, for the first 7 days.

You should seek further help if:

- the pain does not settle within a week, or is getting worse
- you experience heavy bleeding (more than a period)
- you experience a continuous aching pain in your lower abdomen or a smelly discharge, or feel hot, shivery or unwell, particularly within the first 3 weeks of fitting. This may suggest an infection.
- you get deep pain during sex.
- you cannot feel the threads or think you can feel the stem of the device.

*If you are having problems or think something is wrong you should make an appointment at one of our clinics. Alternatively, you may visit your GP, or your local A&E if an emergency. If your concerns are within 4 weeks of your IUC procedure, you may phone **0203 317 5470** to discuss these with a clinician. If your swab tests positive for chlamydia or gonorrhoea you must get treatment quickly. You will be sent a link to book an appt for this, but can walk in if no slots are available.*