



## BASIC INFORMATION

### DESCRIPTION

• The goal of contraception (or birth control) is to prevent an unplanned pregnancy. The majority of methods of contraception enable sexually active couples to temporarily avoid pregnancy. Permanent birth control is accomplished through sterilization. Be sure you know and understand the different types of birth control available to you, the risks and benefits of each, and any side effects, so that you can make an informed choice.

• An intrauterine contraception (IUC) is a tiny object (usually made of plastic) that is inserted into the uterus (womb) to prevent pregnancy. One or two plastic strings (filaments) attached to the IUC extend out through the cervical canal. These strings enable periodic checking for position and as an aid when the IUC is removed. IUCs are visible on x-ray should one become “lost.” The IUC interferes with the transportation of both sperm and egg with the end result that fertilization does not take place. The Paragard Copper T is hormone-free and effective for up to ten years. The Mirena IUC releases a small quantity of the hormone levonorgestrel over 8 years (FDA label recommends replacing it at 5 years).

### ADVANTAGES

- IUCs are quite effective for birth control (97-99%).
- The device is easily fitted and tolerated by most women.
- Enjoyment of spontaneous sexual intercourse; freedom from concern once IUC is in place.
- The IUC requires no daily routine.
- Although they cannot be discontinued as easily as discontinuing a daily pill (oral contraceptives), they can be removed at any time by a trained health care provider.
- With the progesterone-containing IUC, there will probably be less bleeding during menstrual cycles.
- Fertility for a woman after removal of the IUC should probably be the same as it was before using the IUC.

### DISADVANTAGES

- Cramping and bleeding may occur the first few days after insertion.
- Spontaneous expulsion of the IUC. Occurs more frequently within the first 3 months to one year. It is noted in most instances, but some women may not be aware of the device being expelled.
- Occasional bleeding between menstrual periods and changes in amount of flow and increased pain with periods.
- IUCs offer no protection against sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). A form of barrier protection needs to be used by those at risk.
- IUC may perforate the uterus and travel into the abdomen. “Lost” IUCs require special examinations.

• IUCs can increase the risk for pelvic infections such as pelvic inflammatory disease (PID) which can impair future fertility.

- If pregnancy occurs with an IUC in place, there is a 50% chance of miscarriage. The IUC should be removed.
- IUCs may increase the risk of ectopic pregnancy.
- Not usually recommended for women who have a diagnosed gynecological problem or are pregnant, women who have certain chronic disorders or STDs, women who have not yet had a child and women with multiple sexual partners.



## GENERAL MEASURES

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

- You will have a full medical examination including a pelvic exam, Pap smear testing, breast exam, pregnancy test and tests for STDs before being given an IUC.
- The device will be inserted by a trained health care provider.

• The timing for the insertion can vary; it may be done during a menstrual period, between periods or 6 weeks after childbirth or abortion.

1) To insert:

• The IUC is straightened out in a plastic tube (like a straw) and the tube is inserted through the cervix and vagina into the uterus. The IUC is pushed through the tube and it springs back into shape in the uterus.

• The tube is removed and the IUC stays in the uterus with its string dangling into the vagina. You will be instructed on how to check for the string.

• There may be pain during the insertion and sometimes, cramping for the rest of the day.

2) To remove:

- Consult your doctor.

### MEDICATIONS

Ask your health care provider about the need for pain medication during and after the insertion procedure.



## NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

• You are interested in an intrauterine contraception (IUC) for birth control.

• Following insertion of an IUC, unexpected side effects develop including excessive or irregular vaginal bleeding, painful cramps in the abdomen, vaginal discharge, signs of infection (fever, chills, muscle aches).

• You cannot find the string of the IUC when you search for it.

• The IUC has been in place for the length of time recommended for the type you had inserted.