

# Hormonal IUD

## Intrauterine Device



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

The hormonal IUD, or intrauterine device, is a type of birth control that is placed in your uterus by a health care provider. It is a small T-shaped piece of plastic that releases a hormone that causes changes in the uterus to prevent pregnancy. It is a very effective form of birth control and can be removed any time by a healthcare provider. Brand names include Mirena, Skyla, Liletta, and Kyleena. This type of IUD lasts from 3 to 5 years, depending on the brand.

## Pros and cons of using this type of IUD

### Pros

- IUDs are more than 99% effective, meaning there is less than 1 pregnancy a year for every 100 women using the IUD.
- Once it is placed, you do not need to do anything else to prevent pregnancy, such as taking a pill everyday or interrupting sex for birth control.
- It can be removed if you wish to become pregnant. It will not make it harder to get pregnant later.
- It will make your periods light or may stop your periods. This is normal and does not need to be treated. It can be used to help women who suffer from severe cramps and heavy periods.

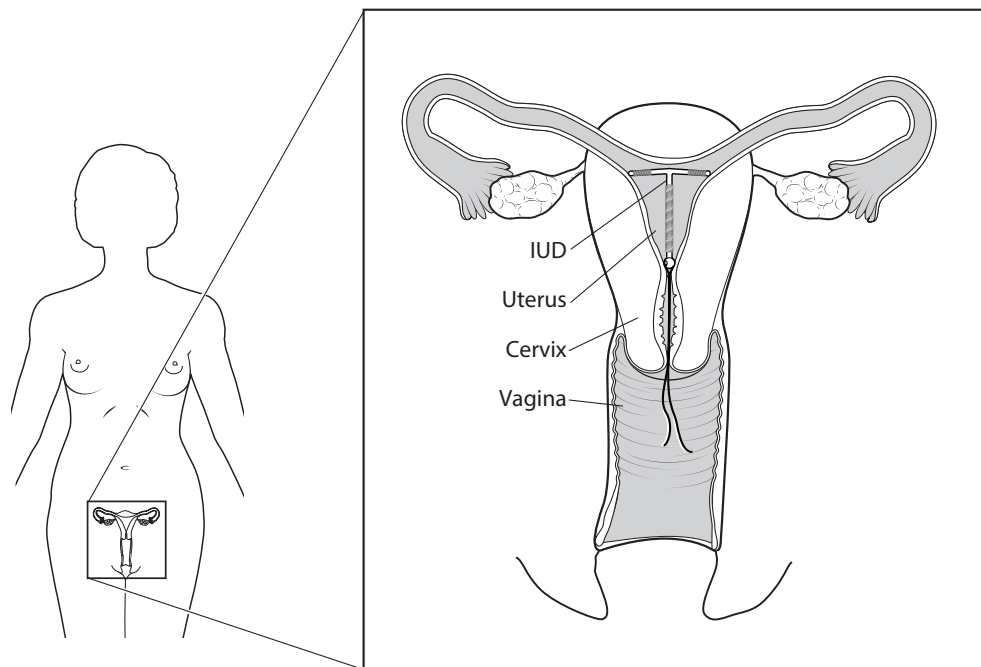
### Cons

- You may have some minor side effects after getting an IUD. They usually go away in 3 to 6 months after your body adjusts. Side effects may include:
  - Cramping or back ache for a few days after the IUD is placed. You can take an over the counter pain medicine to help with this, such as acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil, Motrin).
  - Bleeding that is not regular or spotting.
- The IUD will not protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV. The only way to protect against STIs is by using a condom each and every time you have intercourse.
- About 1 in 12 women using this type of IUD develop a cyst on their ovary. These cysts normally disappear on their own within 1 to 2 months.
- The IUD can slip part way or all the way out of your uterus.
- Very rarely, IUDs cause some more serious side effects, such as an infection or it can go through the wall of the uterus.

## How the IUD is placed

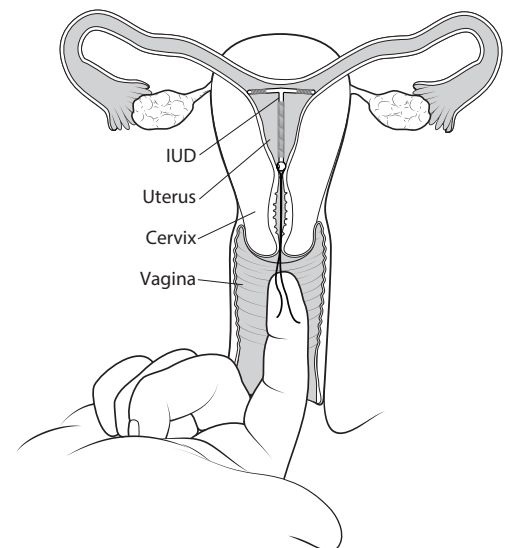
The IUD can be placed during a visit to your healthcare provider's office.

- You will first have a pelvic exam to find the position of your uterus.
- A speculum will be inserted into your vagina, so the healthcare provider can see the opening to your uterus (cervix).
- Your cervix will be cleaned with an antiseptic solution.
- A small plastic tube that has the IUD inside will be inserted through your cervix and into your uterus.
- The tube will be removed, leaving the IUD in place in your uterus.
- You may have some mild to medium pain when the IUD is placed. You should not be able to feel the IUD after.
- The strings on the end of the IUD will be cut, so only 1 to 2 inches will hang into your vagina.
- The speculum will be removed.



## Check the IUD String Monthly

You can feel the IUD string in your vagina with your fingers. Check monthly to make sure it is in the same place. Your healthcare provider will teach you how to do this.



## Common questions about IUDs

### Will the hormones in the IUD make me gain weight?

Many women gain weight during their reproductive years no matter what type of birth control they use, but not likely because of the IUD. Mirena reports fewer than 5% of women using their brand of IUD have had weight gain.

### Will the hormone cause me to have mood swings?

Most of the hormone stays in the uterus and very little gets into the blood stream. So while it is possible, the hormone is not likely to affect your mood or cause mood swings.

### Can I still use tampons?

Yes, you can use tampons while you have an IUD. Tampons will not move or harm your IUD.

### Will the IUD get in the way of having sex?

You and your partner should not feel the IUD or the string during sex. Having sex will not move or harm your IUD. If you think it is causing a problem during sex, contact your healthcare provider.

### Does an IUD increase my chance of having an ectopic pregnancy?

Because the IUD is so effective, women using them have very low rates of any kind of pregnancy, including ectopic pregnancy. However, in the very small chance that there is a pregnancy with an IUD in place, the fertilized egg has a high chance of implanting outside of the uterus (ectopic). If you are using an IUD and think you are pregnant, see your healthcare provider right away to rule out this dangerous condition.

## Contact your healthcare provider if:

- You have bad pain in your lower belly.
- You cannot feel the string of the IUD or if the string seems shorter than usual.
- Your IUD comes out. You may see it in your underwear or in the toilet.
- You had sex with someone who has or might have an STI, or you think you have an STI.
- You have a fever and you do not know why.

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**Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.**

For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at **614-293-3707** or e-mail **health-info@osu.edu**.