

What is an IUD and how does it work?

An IUD is a small T-shaped device that is put into a person's uterus by a doctor, nurse practitioner, or midwife in their office. The IUD stays in place for 3 -10 years or until it is removed by a health care provider.

IUDs work well and people like them because they are highly effective for prevention of pregnancy without needing to take a pill every day or to rely on a partner to wear a condom. They are an excellent choice for people who cannot take hormones.

There are two types of IUDs available: Copper and Progesterone.

Progesterone (3 – 5 years) (e.g. Mirena and Jaydess)	Copper (3 – 10 years) (e.g. SMB 380, Flexi T 380, Liberté)
<p>Mirena</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Mirena IUD is made of plastic and a small amount of the progestin hormone called levonorgestrel. The Mirena IUD is over 99% effective at preventing pregnancy. Although most people will get some spotting in the first month or two after their Mirena has been inserted, periods will become lighter and easier. About 20% of people with the Mirena IUD will have no periods after the first year of use. The amount of hormone in the Mirena IUD is less than in birth control pills, patches, or shots. Only about 5% of women will notice any hormone side effects (e.g. weight gain, mood changes, or acne). The continuous release of low levels of progesterone thickens cervical mucus to block sperm entering the uterus. It also thins the uterus lining, making it a good choice for people with heavy periods. The Mirena IUD is effective for five years. <p>Jaydess</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Similar to the Mirena IUD, but with less of the progestin hormone, smaller in size, and effective for three years. The Jaydess IUD is a good choice for people who prefer to get a period and want very effective birth control for a shorter time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copper IUDs are made of plastic and copper. Copper IUDs are over 99% effective in preventing pregnancy. People may choose copper IUDs because they are affordable and have no hormones. Copper IUDs have no hormonal side effects (e.g. <i>no</i> weight gain, mood changes, nausea, or sore breasts). Copper IUDs can make periods heavier, longer and crampier. People who already experience heavy, crampy periods may prefer a progestin IUD. Copper IUDs prevent pregnancy by stopping sperm from fertilizing an egg and reducing sperm movement. There are several types of copper IUDs, with length of use ranging from 3 -10 years. Copper IUDs are also highly effective as emergency contraception if inserted within 7 days of unprotected intercourse. For more information about accessing providers in BC, visit www.emergencyiud.com.

How is an IUD inserted and removed?

- IUDs are inserted by a physician, nurse practitioner, or midwife in their clinic.
- IUDs can be inserted immediately after delivery, six weeks postpartum, or immediately after an abortion.
- IUDs can be inserted at any time during the menstrual cycle.
- A Copper IUD can be inserted 7 days after unprotected intercourse as emergency contraception
- Removal of an IUD is quick and easy and can be done by your health care provider in their clinic.

Will the insertion hurt?

Most people feel a strong cramp at the time of the insertion. Some health care providers recommend that you take ibuprofen one hour before your appointment to help with the cramping. Your health care provider may also use a local anesthetic on your cervix. Most people feel fine after resting for a few minutes after IUD insertion. Some find that the cramps remain strong and may require stronger pain medication for a short time.

How effective is it?

- An IUD is an excellent method of birth control - approximately 99% effective immediately after insertion.
- A copper IUD is also the most effective form of emergency contraception if inserted within seven days of unprotected intercourse.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IUD is always in place. There is nothing to do before you have intercourse. • A good method for people who are breastfeeding (after six weeks postpartum) or who cannot use estrogen methods of birth control. • It is immediately reversible with no long-term effects on fertility. • Reduced cost over time compared to other methods. • Most health benefit plans will pay for the Mirena so for some it is the most cost effective choice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires at least one visit to a health care provider. • Does not protect against STIs. • Some people experience amenorrhea (absence of period) with the Mirena IUD, although some people view this as an advantage. • Many people experience heavier and crampier periods with a copper IUD • Initial expense. • Cannot be returned to a pharmacy or to Opt after purchase.

Who might not be able to use an IUD?

People who:

- Have an active pelvic infection. But an IUD can be inserted after treatment.
- Are allergic to copper (copper IUDs only) or may have adverse effects from progesterone (Mirena or Jaydess IUDs).
- Are already pregnant.
- Have unexplained uterine bleeding or anemia.
- Have certain types of cancer or tumors.
- Have an abnormal cervix or unusually shaped uterus.
- People who are less than six weeks postpartum (unless inserted immediately following delivery).

Could there be complications?

- There is approximately a 5% chance of the IUD falling out.
- There is a 0.01 % chance of the IUD poking a small hole (called a perforation) in the uterus. Perforations usually heal on their own. There is an even rarer chance of needing minor surgery to remove the IUD from outside the uterus.
- Infections following insertion are rare and occur in the first three weeks after insertion.
- Become aware of early warning signs. If you experience any of these go to an emergency department or walk in clinic:

- P** Period late (pregnancy), abnormal spotting, or bleeding
- A** Abdominal pain, pain with intercourse
- I** Infection exposure, abnormal discharge
- N** Not feeling well, fever, or chills
- S** String missing or seems long