



Information Sheets: LARC

Long-Acting Reversible Contraception

Important things to remember:

- 1. To be objective and not to allow your own experiences/opinions of a method to adversely affect the way you discuss contraceptive options.***
- 2. That the nurse or doctor in a clinic is best qualified to guide a young person to a specific method and your role is to give general advice and information.***

INFORMATION FOR PROFESSIONALS
to support you when giving advice to young people

The Contraceptive Implant

What it is

A small flexible rod which is put under the skin of the upper arm. It releases a hormone similar to progesterone. The main way it prevents pregnancy is to stop ovulation (the release of eggs from the ovary)

How it is fitted

A Doctor or Nurse uses a local anaesthetic to numb the skin on the upper arm. The implant is then inserted.

How it is removed

A local anaesthetic is used and a very small cut (only a few millimetres) is made. The implant is then gently pulled out.

Advantages

- Very Effective – MUCH MORE effective than the pill
- (More than 99% effective, which means less than 1 in 1000 women with an implant get pregnant every 3 years)
- Lasts for 3 years but can be removed at any time.
- No worry about contraception while it lasts.
- It doesn't interrupt sex.
- In some women their periods will lighten or stop.
- As soon as the implant is removed fertility returns to normal.
- It is a safe alternative form of contraception if a woman cannot use estrogens such as in the combined pill or patch

Disadvantages

- periods become irregular so bleeding is unpredictable
- Very occasionally women report developing acne and other hormonal side effects.
- It does not protect against STI'S.

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Intrauterine Device (IUD)

What it is

A small plastic and copper device that is inserted into the uterus. It has 1 or 2 soft fine threads that hang through the cervix into the vagina. It works in a number of ways to prevent an egg being fertilised by a sperm – so a pregnancy does not start.

How it is fitted

A trained Doctor or Nurse will fit the IUS. It usually takes 15-20 minutes and can sometimes be a bit painful. A local anaesthetic may be used to reduce the discomfort of fitting.

How it is removed

A trained Doctor or Nurse removes the IUD by gently pulling on the threads. This is only slightly uncomfortable and not painful. Fertility immediately returns to normal.

Advantages

- Very Effective – MUCH MORE effective than the pill
- Over 99 per cent effective. Much less than 1 woman in 100 will get pregnant over five years.
- Newer IUD's last 10 years (other types 5 years) but can be taken out sooner.
- No worry about contraception while it lasts.
- It doesn't interrupt sex.
- As soon as the IUD is removed fertility returns to normal.
- It is not affected by other medicines or treatments.
- It is a safe alternative form of contraception if a woman cannot use estrogens such as in the combined pill or patch

Disadvantages

- Periods become longer – and sometimes heavier . This may improve after the 1st month.
- Although extremely rare, an IUD/IUS can go through the uterus wall or the cervix and surgery may be needed to remove it. (About 1 in 2,000 fittings)
- An internal examination is needed prior to fitting.
- There is a small risk of pelvic infection after fitting which can lead to pain and fertility problems if not treated urgently. If the woman is free of Chlamydia infection at the time of fitting the risk is tiny. If she has Chlamydia then it is significant.
- An IUD can be pushed out (expelled) by the womb/uterus, but this is quite rare. 1 in 100 per year.
- Does not protect against STI'S.

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The Intrauterine System (IUS)

What it is

A small T shaped plastic device that is inserted into the uterus/womb. It has 1 or 2 soft fine threads that hang through the cervix into the vagina. It releases a hormone like progesterone and works in a number of ways to prevent an egg being fertilised by a sperm – so a pregnancy does not start.:

How it is fitted

A trained Doctor or Nurse will fit the IUS. It usually takes 15-20 minutes and can sometimes be a bit painful. A local anaesthetic may be used to reduce the discomfort of fitting.

How it is removed

A trained Doctor or Nurse removes the IUD by gently pulling on the threads. This is only slightly uncomfortable and not painful. Fertility immediately returns to normal.

Advantages

- Very Effective – MUCH MORE effective than the pill
- Over 99 per cent effective. Much less than 1 woman in 100 will get pregnant over five years.
- Periods usually become lighter, shorter, can be less painful and may stop altogether.
- The IUS lasts up to 5 years but can be removed sooner.
- No worry about contraception while it lasts.
- It doesn't interrupt sex
- As soon as the IUS is removed fertility returns to normal.
- It is not affected by other medicines or treatments.
- It is a safe alternative form of contraception if a woman cannot use estrogens such as in the combined pill or patch.

Disadvantages

- Occasionally may cause acne, headaches and breast tenderness.
- Very rarely causes small ovarian cysts that are harmless, usually painless and rarely need treatment.
- Although extremely rare, an IUD/IUS can go through the uterus wall or the cervix and surgery may be needed to remove it. (About 1 in 2,000 fittings)
- An internal examination is needed prior to fitting.
- There is a small risk of pelvic infection after fitting which can lead to pain and fertility problems if not treated urgently. If the woman is free of Chlamydia infection at the time of fitting the risk is tiny. If she has Chlamydia then it is significant.
- An IUD can be pushed out (expelled) by the womb/uterus, but this is quite rare 1 in 100 per year.
- Does not protect against STI'S.

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The Contraceptive Injection

What it is

An injection is a slow-release of a hormone like progesterone. The main way it prevents pregnancy is to stop ovulation (the release of eggs from the ovary)

How it is given

Depo-Provera is injected into a muscle, usually the bottom, (sometimes the upper arm). It needs to be repeated every 12 weeks

Advantages

- Very Effective – MUCH MORE effective than the pill
- More than 99% effective, which means less than 4 in 1000 women , will get pregnant over 2 years.
- It lasts for 12 weeks.
- You don't have to worry about contraception as long as it lasts.
- It doesn't interrupt sex.
- It is not affected by other medicines.
- In some women periods will lighten or stop – this is not unhealthy.
- It may help reduce painful periods (?delete and premenstrual symptoms.)
- It is a safe alternative form of contraception if a woman cannot use estrogens such as in the combined pill or patch

Disadvantages

- Periods become irregular so bleeding is unpredictable
- Depo-Provera has been linked to osteoporosis (bone thinning) in some women. For this reason YOUNG women are encouraged to consider other methods before going with the injection. Only if they have risk factors for osteoporosis would they be absolutely recommended to avoid it. This will be discussed at the clinic.
- Depo-Provera can cause weight gain in some women.
- After the injections are stopped, it may take several months for any side effects to disappear and fertility to return to normal.
- Does not protect against STI'S.