

Intrauterine Device (IUD)

What is an IUD?

IUDs are small contraceptive devices that are placed in the uterus (womb) to prevent pregnancy.

IUDs belong to a group of contraceptive options called Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC). These are some of the most effective forms of contraception.

At Family Planning Tasmania two types of IUD are used:

- The hormonal IUD (Mirena and Kyleena) is made of plastic and releases small amounts of the hormone progestogen into the uterus.
- The Copper IUD (Multiload or Copper T) is made of plastic and has copper wrapped around it.

How do IUDs work?

IUDs affect sperm movement to the egg and change the lining of the uterus (womb) to make it difficult for a fertilised egg to take hold. A fertilised egg is when a sperm and egg have merged together.

Hormonal IUDs thicken the mucus at the neck of the uterus (womb), blocking the sperm from reaching the egg.

Copper IUDs affect the way sperm can move and survive in the uterus. This stops sperm cells from reaching and fertilising the egg. IUDs also change the lining of the uterus to stop a fertilised egg from implanting.

Is an IUD right for me?

IUDs are suitable for many people. The Hormonal IUD is the most popular form of Long Acting Reversible Contraception in the world. You do not need to have gone through childbirth to get an IUD. During assessment the doctor will check to see if an IUD is suitable for you.

You may not be able to have an IUD if you:

- have an active pelvic infection or abnormal vaginal bleeding
- have had certain types of surgery to the cervix
- have a condition that might alter the shape of the uterus e.g. some fibroids
- have had breast cancer in the last 5 years (Hormonal IUD only)
- have heavy painful periods or if you are anaemic (copper IUD only)

How does an IUD get inserted and removed?

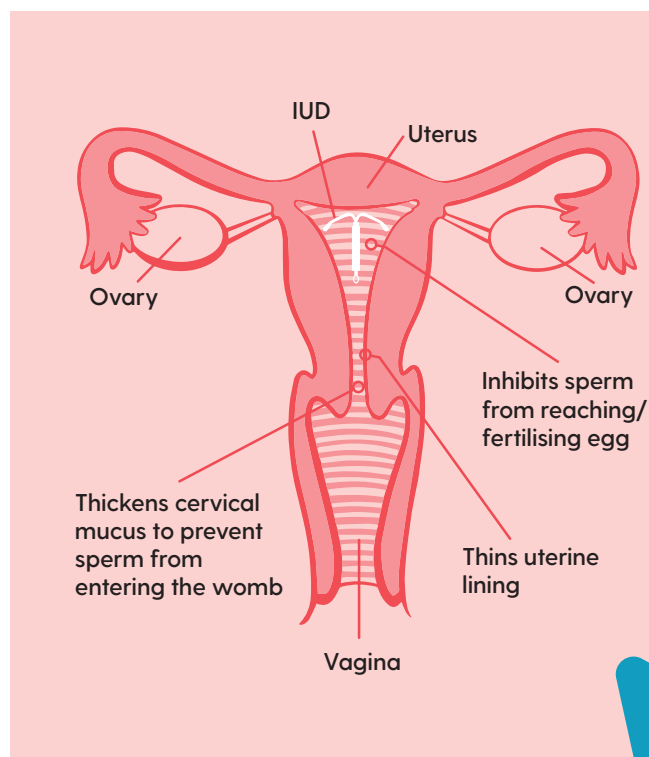
IUDs need a small procedure to be fitted/ inserted. This procedure is carried out by a trained professional.

To put the IUD in, the doctor will put a speculum into your vagina and then use a special inserter to put the IUD in through the opening of your cervix and into your uterus.

The process usually takes less than five minutes.

Most people feel some cramping or pain when they have an IUD inserted but it usually only lasts a couple of minutes. For a small number of people, the pain is more severe. Some people feel dizzy and there is a small chance of fainting. Your doctor will discuss pain relief with you.

If you would like your IUD removed, please don't attempt it yourself. A doctor or nurse will remove it for you by gently pulling on the threads. This is typically very quick and easy.



Advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IUDs are over 99% effective. • A “set and forget” contraceptive method: once an IUD is inserted you only need to check the strings once a month. • They are cost effective as they work for a long time (between 5-10 years). • There is rapid return to usual fertility (ability to have a baby) once the IUD is removed.
Additional IUD advantages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is safe for people who have never had a child to have an IUD. • IUDs can be taken out at any time by a trained doctor or nurse. • They do not interfere with breast feeding. • A hormonal IUD may help with heavy periods and period pain.
Possible side effects and risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small risk of infection at the time the IUD is fitted and for the first 3 weeks. • A small risk of perforation, which is when the IUD makes a hole in the wall of the uterus when it is fitted. • If the IUD does not work and you get pregnant, there may be complications associated with the pregnancy. • There is a small risk that the IUD can fall out. • Hormonal side effects are rare but can include headaches, acne and breast tenderness.

Hormonal vs Copper IUDs

Hormonal



99.8% effective

- May initially experience 3-5 months of frequent and irregular bleeding between periods. There are medications available to assist with this.
- Can reduce the amount of blood loss and pain with periods.
- About 40% of people find their periods stop all together.
- Mirena has been a popular hormonal IUD for over 15 years.
- Kyleena is slightly smaller in size than Mirena and releases a smaller amount of hormone.
- Mirena can be left in for 10 years for people aged 45 years and over who are using it for contraception.
- Mirena can be used as the progesterone component of Hormone Replacement Therapy (HRT) to treat symptoms around the time of menopause.

Copper



99.5% effective

- You will continue to have periods.
- Last 5-10 years depending on which type.
- There is no hormone in a copper IUD.
- A copper IUD can be inserted up to 5 days after unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy (Emergency Contraception).
- You may initially experience a few weeks of irregular bleeding between periods. Periods are sometimes heavier and more painful, especially in the first six months.

How do I get an IUD?

You can get an IUD inserted at Family Planning Tasmania clinics, some GPs, private gynecologists and at public hospitals. The process at Family Planning Tasmania involves two or three appointments:

1. Assessment

Typically a 30 minute appointment to check if you're suitable for an IUD, organise any tests or STI checks and talk about which contraception you will use until the IUD is inserted.

2. Insertion

Typically a 45 minute appointment. We will ask you to provide written consent and then insert the IUD which typically only takes 5 minutes.

3. Follow up

Your doctor may ask you to attend a 6 week check up to make sure everything is ok with the IUD.

How do I get started?

To discuss whether an IUD is right for you, please make an appointment for an IUD assessment at your nearest Family Planning Tasmania clinic. You can make an appointment by visiting our website:

