

# Care After an IUD (Intrauterine Device) Placement

## IUD (Intrauterine Device) Placement

On \_\_\_\_\_, you had the \_\_\_\_\_ IUD placed in your uterus.

An IUD is designed to keep you from getting pregnant.

## Activity

Do not have sexual intercourse or use tampons for 7 to 14 days after the IUD is placed.

## Discomfort

Cramping is common after an IUD placement. You can help relieve the discomfort by taking acetaminophen (such as Tylenol®), ibuprofen (such as Advil®) or aspirin. Follow package directions. You can also use a heating pad.

It is normal to have cramping off and on for up to 6 months after the IUD is placed.

## Bleeding

Irregular bleeding and spotting is normal for the first few months after the IUD is placed.

It is possible to have irregular bleeding or spotting for up to 6 months after the IUD is placed. The bleeding will become lighter quickly with the Mirena® and Skyla® IUDs.

## IUD Strings

- Check for the IUD strings within 1 to 3 days after it is placed. This will help you know how long the strings should be when it is in the right place.
- To check for the strings:
  - Wash your hands.
  - Sit or squat down.
  - Place one finger into your vagina until you feel your cervix. It will feel hard and rubbery (like the end of your nose).
  - The string ends should be coming through your cervix. Do not pull on the strings.

## Monthly IUD Check

- It is possible for the IUD to come out of your uterus. If it does slip out of place, it will most likely happen in the first few months after it is placed.
- Do a check for the IUD strings one time each month to make sure the IUD is still in place.
- Do not check for the strings during your menstrual period.
- The IUD may have moved out of place if:
  - the strings feel much longer than before
  - you feel the hard plastic part of the IUD
  - you can't feel the strings at all.

If the IUD is out of place, call your health care provider and use another type of birth control until you are seen.

**(over)**

## Your Period

Your period will likely be shorter and lighter with the Mirena and Skyla IUDs. About 2 out of 5 women will stop having periods with the Mirena and Skyla IUDs.

Your period may be heavier and longer with the Paragard® IUD.

## Birth Control

If you had the IUD placed for birth control:

- the Paragard IUD starts working right away
- the Mirena and Skyla IUDs start working right away if it was inserted within 7 days after the start of your period
- If you had the Mirena or Skyla IUD inserted at any other time during your menstrual cycle, use another type of birth control, such as condoms, for at least 7 days.

## Pregnancy

Pregnancy is not common after IUD placement, but it can happen. If you have early pregnancy symptoms like nausea (upset stomach) and vomiting (throwing up), breast tenderness, frequent urination or abdominal pain, you can take a pregnancy test.

## Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs)

IUDs do not protect against sexually transmitted diseases, including the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), human papillomavirus (HPV), genital warts, gonorrhea, chlamydia and herpes.

Condoms should be used to reduce the risk of getting a sexually transmitted disease. If you think that you have been exposed to a sexually transmitted disease, please call your health care provider.

## When Your IUD Should Be Removed or Replaced

The IUD should only be removed or replaced by a health care provider.

- The Skyla IUD should be removed or replaced after 3 years.
- The Mirena IUD should be removed or replaced after 5 years.
- The Paragard IUD should be removed or replaced after 10 years.

## When to Call Your Health Care Provider

Call your health care provider if you have any of the following:

- severe abdominal pain or cramping
- heavy bleeding (maxi pad soaked in 1 hour or less)
- chills or a temperature higher than 100.4 F
- foul-smelling vaginal discharge
- painful intercourse
- positive pregnancy test
- the IUD may have moved out of place
- any questions or concerns.

## Follow-up Appointment

Please keep your follow-up appointment for 4 to 6 weeks after the IUD has been placed.