

COIL FITTING PATIENT INFORMATION PRIOR TO AN APPOINTMENT.

This information is for women considering an intra-uterine contraceptive device (IUCD or coil). These include the copper coil (non-hormonal) eg Nova-T, and hormonal intra-uterine system (IUS) e.g. Mirena.

The copper coil is licensed for 5 years, unless you have it fitted after your 40th birthday when it can be used for contraception until the menopause. This coil prevents fertilisation of the egg, and may also prevent implantation. Your periods may become heavier and more painful with a copper coil.

The IUS is licensed for 5 years, unless you have it fitted after your 45th birthday when it can be used for contraception until the menopause. This works by preventing sperm penetration into the upper reproductive tract, and implantation. >60% women will ovulate with Mirena. Most women have irregular bleeding/spotting for up to 6 months. After this approximately 1/3 of women have no periods, 1/3 have light regular periods, 1/3 have light irregular periods.

These can be fitted by Dr Vicki Ramage, Dr Sue Myint, and Dr Lizzie Davison.

BENEFITS AND RISKS

Benefits: Fit and forget; very effective contraception; Mirena may help heavy periods.

Risks: Discomfort/dizziness/fainting on insertion; infection; expulsion or change of position (up to 1 in 20); failure (IUD: <1 in 100 at 1 year, up to 2 in 100 at 12 years; IUS: 1 in 1000); ectopic pregnancy (if pregnancy occurs); damage to cervix or womb including perforation (less than 1 in 1000); altered vaginal bleeding (IUD- heavier, more painful or prolonged periods, IUS- erratic bleeding up to 6 months); IUS- hormonal effects in some women- greasy skin, mood changes, weight changes, these are all rare and often settle after 3 months; sometimes we are unable to insert a coil (we can try at another time in your cycle, or refer on to Sexual Health Clinic)

TIMING OF COIL FIT APPOINTMENT

- ❖ Before a coil can be fitted it is important that there is no chance you are pregnant. If there is doubt, fitting may be postponed.
- ❖ Continue regular, effective contraception up until your coil fitting. (You may need to continue for a further 7 days after depending on timing.) Consider a GP phone appointment to discuss contraception until then if not already using this. Take especial care with condoms or consider abstaining from sexual intercourse from your last period.
- ❖ The ideal time to fit a coil is in the first 7 days of your cycle (day 1 is the day your period starts). The insertion procedure may be easier at this time; however it can also be done at other times in your menstrual cycle. If fitted during the first 7 days of your cycle it is effective immediately, otherwise you may need to use condoms for a further 7 days after fitting.
- ❖ If you don't have periods at present (e.g. during breastfeeding or whilst using other methods of contraception), a coil fit can be arranged at any time providing there is no chance of pregnancy. In some circumstances a negative pregnancy test may be needed before a coil can be fitted. To rely on a negative result, effective contraception or abstinence from sex is required for the 3 weeks before the pregnancy test.
- ❖ After having a baby it is advisable to wait at least 4 weeks before a coil is fitted. There are other appropriate forms of contraception available to use before this time (see <http://www.patient.co.uk/health/contraception-after-having-a-baby> & www.fpa.org or discuss with a nurse/GP).
- ❖ Please arrange childcare for any children. Please do not bring children to the appointment. It is not possible to safely supervise them during the procedure, and also reduces the likelihood of a successful fit.
- ❖ Do book a GP phone appointment in advance of the fitting if needed for any questions or concerns.

COIL REPLACEMENT:

- ❖ If you already have a coil in place, please either abstain from sexual intercourse or use a condom carefully in the 7 days before you attend. Sperm can live in the pelvis for 7 days, so there is a theoretical chance of pregnancy if this advice is not followed, as, on rare occasions it may not be possible to fit the replacement coil successfully.
- ❖ If you are attending for a replacement coil and your coil change is overdue, you are advised to use an additional form of contraception eg condoms. In some cases, a negative pregnancy test after at least 3 weeks of contraception/abstinence, may be required before the coil can be changed.

THE FITTING PROCESS:

- ❖ Please allow up to an hour for the appointment, to allow for delays.
- ❖ The doctor will ask questions to check the coil is suitable for you. You will have the opportunity to ask any questions, before giving your consent to proceed with the fitting.
- ❖ The process of fitting a coil involves the following steps. A vaginal examination will be undertaken to check the position of your womb. A plastic speculum will be inserted to hold the vagina open. A swab may be taken to check for chlamydia. Some anaesthetic gel may be applied to the cervix. A clip is attached to the cervix to stabilise it, and the space inside the womb is measured. The coil is inserted through the cervix into the womb. The threads attached to the coil and protruding from the cervix (and ultimately used to remove it) are trimmed to 2-3cm. You may feel some discomfort, crampy pain, nausea or dizziness, but if this occurs it is usually for a very short time
- ❖ Remember, you can change your mind about having a coil fitted at any time
- ❖ You will be given advice after fitting about what to expect and when to come back.
- ❖ Please ensure you have no major commitments afterwards as you may need to take it easy and relax for the rest of the day

BEFORE THE FITTING:

- ❖ Please take some painkillers an hour before the procedure (either ibuprofen 400mg (with or after food) or paracetamol 1g- or both-as long as you are not allergic to these) as some women experience discomfort, like period cramps, during coil insertions.
- ❖ Please have something light to eat before your appointment, and drink plenty of fluids on the day.
- ❖ Some women may feel unwell during and after the fitting. It is therefore advisable to have someone with you or someone you can contact by telephone in case you feel unwell. If possible, ask a friend to accompany you to drive you home
- ❖ It is usual practice to offer a chlamydia test before or at fitting an IUD/IUS to all our patients. You can request a free self-swab from www.shl.uk 2-3 weeks beforehand.
- ❖ Please wear loose, comfortable clothes and footwear for your appointment.
- ❖ Please bring a sanitary pad to wear after the fitting.

AFTER THE FITTING:

- ❖ Use condoms for 48 hours to minimise any risk of infection.
- ❖ You may experience bleeding or cramping. Continue with regular painkillers if required. If the pain is more uncomfortable than a period, or isn't settling after a week, or if you get a temperature or offensive-smelling discharge, talk to a doctor.
- ❖ If you have any concerns after your coil fitting please do not hesitate to contact the surgery for advice.
- ❖ Book in for a coil check appointment with a GP 6 weeks after your coil fit if you have any queries or concerns, or if you are unable to feel your threads.