

Intrauterine Device (IUD) Aftercare Instructions

Brown Health Services Patient Education Series

When does my IUD start working?

The copper IUD (Paragard) begins working now.

Hormonal IUDs (Mirena/Liletta, Kyleena, Skyla) start working in 7 days.

What should I do today? When can I have sex?

Today, you may go back to school or work. Please abstain from vaginal intercourse, baths, swimming, tampon use, and menstrual cup use for at least 24 hours after IUD insertion.

Mirena/Liletta, Kyleena, and Skyla IUD users will need back-up contraception (i.e. condoms) to prevent pregnancy in the first 7 days after placement. If you have sex without a condom before 7 days, you should take emergency contraception to prevent pregnancy.

What should I expect?

You may have more cramps or heavier bleeding with your periods, or spotting between your periods. This is normal. The cramping and bleeding can last for 3-6 months with the Mirena/Liletta, Kyleena, and Skyla IUDs. After 6 months, the cramping and bleeding should get better.

Many IUD users will stop having periods after 1 or 2 years with the Mirena/Liletta, Kyleena, and Skyla IUDs.

If you have the Paragard IUD, you may have more cramping and bleeding with your periods as long as you have the IUD inside you.

How should I take care of myself?

Ibuprofen helps decrease the bleeding and cramping. You can buy ibuprofen at any drug store without a prescription. You can take as many as 4 pills (800 mg) of ibuprofen every 8 hours with food (each pill contains 200 mg).

To prevent cramping, start taking ibuprofen as soon as your period starts and keep taking it every 8 hours for the first 2-3 days of your period.

You can also put a hot water bottle on your belly if you have bad cramps.

Will my IUD come out? What should I do if it comes out?

Your IUD may come out by itself in the first three months. If you can feel the strings, the IUD is in the right place.

If your IUD comes out, you can become pregnant immediately. Use condoms if you think your IUD may have come out.

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How do I check for my IUD strings?

You may check for the strings by inserting one finger into the vagina and feeling for the cervix. The cervix feels similar to the tip of your nose. You should feel strings similar in texture to fishing line coming out of the cervix. Sometimes the strings are tucked high up into the vagina and can be difficult to feel.

Does the IUD protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs)?

The IUD does NOT protect you against STIs (HIV, syphilis, gonorrhea, chlamydia, herpes, HPV, etc.) You should ALWAYS use protection against sexually transmitted infections (i.e. external condoms, internal condoms, dental dams) if you are at risk.

When should I see a health care provider?

Some IUD users may choose to have a follow-up with a provider 4-6 weeks after insertion to check the IUD's placement. If you are able to feel your strings, and are not having any of the symptoms below, you do not need to follow-up. However, your healthcare provider can check your IUD at any time, for any reason.

Within the first 3 weeks of the IUD insertion:

- Fever (> 101 F)
- Chills
- Strong or sharp pain in your stomach or belly

At any time:

- If you think you have been exposed to an STI
- Late period (for Paragard users only)
- Feeling pregnant (breast tenderness, nausea, vomiting)
- Positive home pregnancy test
- Foul smelling vaginal discharge