

## WILL THE IUD INSERTION BE UNCOMFORTABLE

- The IUD insertion procedure can be uncomfortable for some people and can be quite painful for a small number of people (15%). The pain is similar to bad period pain.
- It is recommended that you take oral pain relief (two paracetamol and two ibuprofen) an hour before your appointment.
- While we offer local anaesthetic to numb the cervix at the time of insertion and can provide an anti-anxiety medication beforehand if needed, we are unable to provide sedation. If you would like to have your IUD insertion under sedation there are clinics that do provide this service, please ask our staff about this option.
- A small number of people may feel faint or nauseous following the procedure. If this happens you may be asked to remain at the clinic a little longer.
- If you are concerned about possible discomfort please discuss this with the doctor at your initial appointment.

## AFTER YOUR IUD INSERTION

- You will be encouraged to arrange to be driven home and rest up after the procedure for the remainder of the day. You may need to organise care for children, time off work, etc.
- You will probably be fine to return to normal activities the following day.
- There may be cramping and/or bleeding in the first few days afterwards.
- We advise that nothing should enter the vagina for 72 hours afterwards to reduce infection risk– no tampons, no sex, no water (showering is ok).
- There is no further appointment needed unless you are experiencing problems. Your doctor will discuss this with you at the time of your insertion.

### YOU SHOULD CONTACT THE DOCTOR IF:

- You suspect you might be pregnant.
- You experience excessive pelvic pain or tenderness, fever or chills, offensive discharge, or deep pain with intercourse.
- You can't feel the string or can feel the plastic of the device.

### REFERENCES:

Contraception: An Australian clinical practice handbook 4th Edition  
The copper IUD Fact sheet/ Family Planning NSW  
Faculty of Sexual & Reproductive Healthcare of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists UK. [fsrh.org/home/](http://fsrh.org/home/)  
Guillebaud, J & MacGregor, A 2017. Contraception: Your questions answered. 7th ed. Churchill Livingstone



### OPENING HOURS

Please contact our reception staff on 02 6247 3077 or visit [shfpact.org.au](http://shfpact.org.au) for SHFPACT clinic hours

### LOCATION

SHFPACT is conveniently located in the city.

Level 1,  
28 University Avenue  
Canberra ACT 2601

### CONTACT

02 6247 3077  
[shfpact@shfpact.org.au](mailto:shfpact@shfpact.org.au)

### ENGAGE

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### DONATE

All donations to Sexual Health & Family Planning over \$2.00 are tax deductible

### SHFPACT CLINICAL SERVICES

- Contraceptive advice, information & services
- IUD's and other long acting contraceptive options
- Cervical screening
- Canberra Menopause Centre
- Unplanned Pregnancy Counselling Service
- Sexually transmissible infections (STIs): testing, treatment and advice
- Blood borne virus and HIV testing
- Emergency contraception (the 'Morning After' Pill)
- Breast checks and breast awareness education
- Fertility issues and pre-conception advice
- Sexual difficulties and sexuality education
- PrEP information, advice, and prescription

SHFPACT is a health promotion charity (HPC) assisted with funding from the ACT Government.



Sexual Health and Family Planning ACT  
Level 1, 28 University Ave, Canberra City  
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[shfpact.org.au](http://shfpact.org.au)

Last updated August 2022

I'M ALL ABOUT  
**THE COPPER  
IUD**



## WHAT IS A COPPER IUD?

An intrauterine device (IUD) is a small plastic device that is inserted into the uterus (womb) and is used to prevent pregnancy. IUDs are a highly effective long-acting reversible contraceptive. There are two different types of IUDs- hormonal and copper. The copper IUD is an IUD that has copper wrapped around its stem and arms. It does not contain any hormones.

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

The copper IUD works mainly by preventing fertilisation. It does this by being toxic to the egg and sperm and by interfering with sperm movement. It also prevents the implantation of a fertilised egg. It does not affect ovulation.

## HOW EFFECTIVE IS IT?

The copper IUD is 99.5% effective.

## HOW LONG DOES IT LAST?

The copper IUD lasts either 5 or 10 years, depending on the type.

## WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF A COPPER IUD?

- It is a highly effective contraceptive (99.5%)
- It does not require any day-to-day action on your part.
- It is long-acting (up to 10 years, depending on the type).
- The effect is rapidly reversible after removal.
- It can be used by breastfeeding women.
- While there is an upfront cost for the device and insertion, it is a relatively inexpensive method over time.
- It is a suitable method for people who cannot use or do not wish to use hormonal contraception.

## WHAT ARE THE DISADVANTAGES?

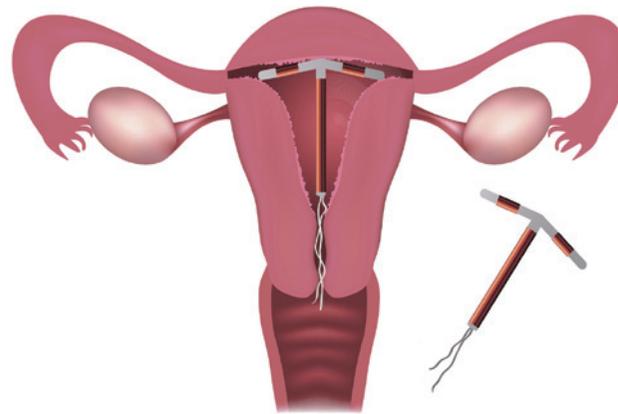
- It must be inserted and removed by a health professional who is specially trained.
- As with any procedure, there is always a small risk of complications.
- The insertion procedure can be uncomfortable.
- It provides no protection from sexually transmissible infections (STIs).
- Some people may have factors in the uterus structure that prevent IUD insertion, and this may not be apparent until insertion is attempted.

## WHO CAN USE A COPPER IUD?

The Copper IUD is suitable if you are looking for a very effective, long-acting, reversible contraceptive method. It is suitable regardless of whether or not you have had children. The Copper IUD is a suitable method if you cannot use or would rather not use a method that contains hormones. As with most contraception, it is suitable for use when breastfeeding.

## WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE PROBLEMS WHICH MAY OCCUR WITH A COPPER IUD?

- Periods may become heavier, longer, and more painful with the copper IUD. This is manageable for most people, but can be a problem if your periods are already heavy and painful.
- There is a small risk of pregnancy occurring with an IUD (less than 1 in 100). If pregnancy does occur, there is a slightly increased risk of it occurring in the fallopian tube.
- Infection: There is a small risk of infection at the time of insertion (about 1 in 500).
- Expulsion: In about 5% of cases, the uterus will expel the device. It is essential to check that the IUD is still in place by feeling for the IUD string after each period. If the string is not present, this may indicate that the IUD has moved or been expelled.
- Perforation: This is a rare event (approximately 2 in 1000 insertions) when the IUD passes through the uterus wall into the pelvic area. This will require minor surgery under a general anaesthetic to remove.



## HOW IS AN IUD INSERTED?

An IUD is inserted by a doctor or nurse who is specially trained to do this. The procedure involves inserting a speculum into the vagina, then using a special IUD inserting tube to place the IUD into the uterus.

## HOW IS AN IUD REMOVED?

Removal of an IUD is done by a doctor or nurse who is specially trained to do this. It is a relatively quick and straightforward procedure and can be done at any time. IUDs have very fine nylon threads attached to them that extend through the cervix to make it easy to check if they are still in place and make it easy for a doctor or nurse to remove.

If you do not want to get pregnant, make sure that you use condoms or abstain from sexual intercourse for 7 days before the IUD is removed. Sperm can live for up to 7 days in the uterus, and there is a risk of pregnancy if an IUD is removed within this time.



## WHERE CAN I HAVE AN IUD INSERTION?

IUDs are only inserted by doctors or nurses who have done specialised IUD training. The clinic at SHFPACT provides IUD insertion services with doctors. Some GPs and most gynaecologists also offer this service.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I HAVE A COPPER IUD INSERTED AT SHFPACT?

### INITIAL CONSULTATION APPOINTMENT

- You will need an initial consultation with a doctor to see if a copper IUD is a suitable option for you.
- At your first appointment the doctor will discuss the IUD and explain the insertion procedure. You may also need a vaginal examination at this time.
- It is best to ask any questions or raise concerns about the procedure at this point.
- The doctor will discuss with you the best timing of your insertion appointment, taking into account your menstrual cycle, and contraceptive use.

### IUD INSERTION APPOINTMENT

- You will be at the clinic from 1 to 1 ½ hours. If parking, please ensure you leave enough time.
- The doctor will talk with you about the procedure and make sure the process is clear.
- You will be asked to go behind the screen, take your clothes off from the waist down, and lay on the examination table. You will be given a privacy sheet.
- The doctor will do a quick vaginal examination, then a speculum will be inserted into the vagina. The IUD will then be inserted using a special device. The IUD strings are trimmed, and the speculum is then removed.
- An uncomplicated insertion procedure takes about 15 mins. A nurse will also be with you throughout the procedure.
- You will be asked to stay at the clinic for a minimum of 20 minutes following the procedure. If you are not feeling well, you will be asked to remain until the staff caring for you think that you are well enough to leave.
- The copper IUD will be provided to you on the day of the insertion appointment; the cost will be included in the fee charged on the day.