

Facts About **Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC): IUD and Implant**

What is a LONG ACTING REVERSIBLE CONTRACEPTION LARC?

There are two types of LARCs. It can be an Intrauterine Device (IUD) or it can be the Birth Control Implant

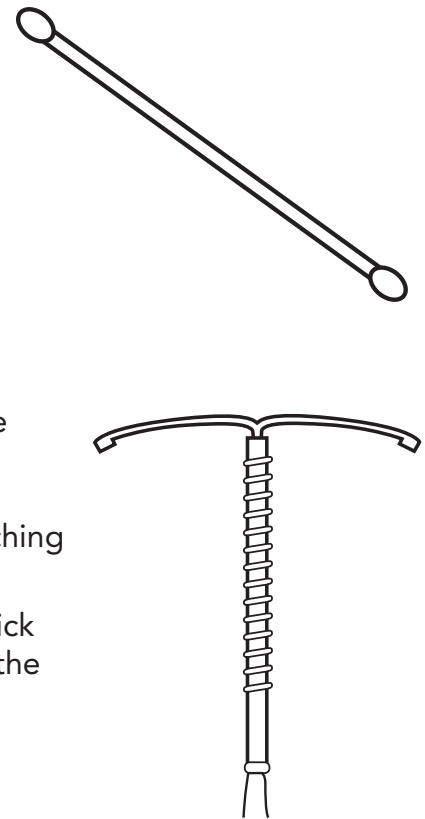
An Intrauterine Device (IUD) is a small T-shaped device made of soft, flexible plastic.

A trained provider places the IUD into the uterus. There are two types: one made with copper (it contains no hormones) and one made with hormones similar to the birth control pill.

The copper IUD works by causing the uterine lining to change and makes the sperm move slowly preventing fertilization of the egg. It can be used up to 10 years.

The hormonal IUD, which can be used for up to 3 to 5 years, works in three ways. It keeps the body from releasing an egg that could be fertilized by a man's sperm. It also causes changes to the cervical mucus making it more difficult for sperm to enter the uterus and keeps a fertilized egg from attaching to the uterus.

A Birth Control Implant is a single flexible rod about the size of a matchstick that is inserted under the skin in the upper arm. It releases hormones into the body. It can be used for up to 3 years.



How well do LARCs work?

The IUD and the implant are the most effective forms of reversible birth control available. All LARCS are 99% effective in preventing pregnancy. Over the long term, LARC methods are more effective than birth control pills, the patch or the ring.

Why is a LARC a good choice for me?

- No one can tell that you are using birth control and it does not interfere with sex or daily activities.
- It can be inserted immediately after a pregnancy termination, a miscarriage, childbirth and while breastfeeding or after pregnancy has been ruled out.
- All women, including adolescents, can get an IUD, even if they have never had children.
- If you wish to become pregnant or if you want to stop using it, you can have the LARC removed.
- The hormonal IUD or implant may help to decrease menstrual pain and heavy menstrual bleeding.
- The copper IUD also is the most effective form of emergency contraception (EC).

How are the LARCs inserted?

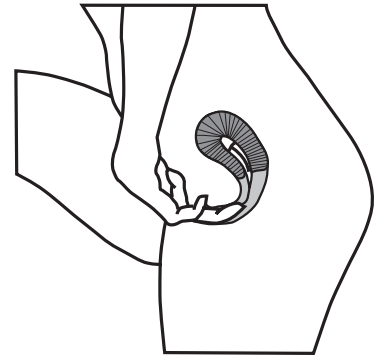
IUD: A doctor or nurse inserts and removes the IUD. The provider will review your medical history and will perform a **pelvic exam**. To insert the IUD, the provider uses a slender plastic tube to place IUD into the **vagina** and guide it through the **cervix** into the uterus. The tube is removed, leaving the IUD in place.

How do you use an IUD?

After the IUD is put in, you do not need to do anything when you have sex. The only thing you need to do is check once a month after your period to make sure the IUD's string is in place.

To check your string:

1. Wash your hands.
2. Squat down or stand with one foot on the toilet.
3. Put your index or middle finger high into your vagina and find your cervix. The cervix is the opening to your uterus (womb). It will feel firm, like the end of your nose.
4. Feel for the string. It will feel small and you may need to ask the nurse or doctor to help you practice before you leave.
5. If you can feel the string, don't do anything.
6. If you cannot feel the string or you are not sure the IUD is in the right place, call your doctor or clinic and use another kind of birth control until your doctor or nurse can examine you.



Birth Control Implant: A doctor or nurse inserts the implant into your arm. First, a small area on your upper arm is numbed with a local anesthetic. It only takes a few minutes for your doctor or nurse to place the implant under the skin with a special inserter. There is no incision when the implant is inserted. An incision is made when it is removed.

Will I have any problems if I use a LARC?

Most women do not have many problems using an IUD or implant. You may have some spotting or irregular bleeding, headaches, nausea, breast tenderness, depression or mood changes, or acne. If using a hormonal IUD and signs or symptoms of a pelvic infection develop such as severe pain, excessive bleeding, fever, etc., call your doctor or clinic.

Smoking increases your risk of serious side effects. Women who use birth control methods with hormones should not smoke. This includes electronic cigarettes.

Copper IUD: Some women may have some cramping and bleeding. The cramping and bleeding may decrease within 1 year of use.

REMEMBER:

- LARCs do not protect you from STIs (sexually transmitted infections) or HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) you can get when you have sex. To protect yourself, use a latex or vinyl condom every time you have oral, vaginal or anal sex.
- Back up contraception may be needed for the hormonal IUDs and birth control implant depending on time of insertion.