

Intrauterine Device (IUD) Insertion: Aftercare Instructions

This brochure will help you know what to expect as you recover after your IUD placement. Please be sure you understand these instructions before you leave the clinic.

What you can expect

Birth control

Your clinician will tell you what type of IUD you have.

- Non-hormonal IUD (Paragard®): This type of IUD provides birth control protection right away.
- Hormonal IUD (Liletta®, Mirena®, Skyla®, Kyleena®): These types of IUDs may take up to 7 days to start providing birth control protection. You should use another form of birth control, such as condoms or abstinence (no sexual intercourse), for at least 7 days unless your clinician instructs you otherwise.

It is unlikely that you will become pregnant after getting an IUD, but it can happen.

Pregnancy is unlikely after IUD placement, but it can happen. If you have early pregnancy symptoms such as nausea and vomiting, breast tenderness, frequent urination or abdominal pain, you can take an at-home pregnancy test. Please call the clinic right away if your pregnancy test result is positive.

It is important to remember that an IUD does not protect you from human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) or other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Using condoms can reduce your risk of HIV infection and STIs.

Discomfort

Cramping in your uterus is common after an IUD placement. You can help relieve the discomfort by putting a heating pad on your abdomen or taking a warm bath. You may take pain medications such as acetaminophen (Tylenol®), ibuprofen (Advil®, Motrin®) or naproxen (Aleve®) as directed.

If your cramping becomes very painful, please call the clinic.

Light bleeding or spotting

If you had a hormonal IUD placed (Liletta, Mirena, Skyla, Kyleena), light bleeding and spotting is normal for the first few months. Some people may have light bleeding or spotting for up to 6 months after the IUD is placed. This bleeding can be annoying at first, but usually becomes lighter and less frequent with time. If you have a lot of bleeding and it is not getting better, please call the clinic.

If you had a Paragard IUD placed, your period may become slightly heavier or last longer.

What to do if your IUD comes out

It is possible (but uncommon) for your IUD to come out of your uterus (expulsion). An expulsion is most likely to happen in the 1st few months after placement, but it can happen at any time.

You may feel cramping and bleeding. You may notice a small piece of plastic (the IUD) coming out of your vagina. If your IUD comes out, you can become pregnant. Use condoms or do not have sexual intercourse if you think your IUD may have come out.

How to check for your IUD strings

To make sure your IUD is in place, you can feel for the IUD strings. To check your strings:

1. Wash your hands, then sit or squat down.
2. Place 1 finger into your vagina until you feel your cervix. It will feel hard and rubbery, like the end of your nose.
3. The string ends should be coming out through your cervix. Do not pull the strings.

You may not be able to feel your IUD strings. Sometimes the strings are tucked high up into the vagina and can be hard to feel. If you are unsure your IUD is still in place, schedule a visit at the clinic. A clinician will check for the strings.

Keep your follow-up visit for 4 to 6 weeks after your IUD placement. At this visit, your clinician will check your IUD and talk with you about any questions or concerns you may have.

When to call your physician

Contact the clinic if you have any of these symptoms:

- Very bad abdominal pain or cramping
- Unusual or very heavy bleeding (soaking a pad every half hour for 2 hours)
- A temperature of 100.4 degrees F or higher
- Foul-smelling vaginal discharge
- Painful intercourse
- Positive pregnancy test result

Contact information

If you have any of the above symptoms, please call our office at 312.695.7382 (TTY: 711).

You will speak with the answering service. It will connect you with a triage nurse or page the on-call physician. If needed, they will have you come to Northwestern Medicine Prentice Women's Hospital Obstetrical Triage Unit (on the 1st floor of the hospital).

- For all other questions, call our office at 312.695.7382.
- Send messages that are not urgent, such as paperwork requests, through MyNM, the patient account portal.
 - We may take 2 business days to respond to MyNM messages.
 - MyNM should only be used for non-urgent messages.
- **For all emergencies, call 911.**