

Fact Sheet - English

THE HORMONE-RELEASING IUD (MIRENA®)



What Is The Hormone-releasing IUD?

The only Hormone-releasing IUD available in Australia is called Mirena®. It is a small plastic device in the shape of a 'T' with a hormone called levonorgestrel in its stem. It is placed inside the uterus to prevent pregnancy. It has a fine nylon string attached and when the IUD is in place, the string comes out through the cervix (the end of the uterus) into the vagina. The Hormone-releasing IUD can stay in place for up to five years.



How Does Hormone-releasing IUD Work?

The hormone makes the mucus in the cervix thicker so that sperm cannot get into the uterus and it also thins the lining of the uterus. It can also sometimes stop your ovaries from releasing an egg.

How Well Does It Work?

The hormone-releasing IUD is a very effective method of preventing a pregnancy (99.8% effective). This means that fewer than one woman in every hundred using this method of contraception for a year would become pregnant.

Who Can Use Hormone-releasing IUD?

Most women are able to use an IUD, including women who haven't had a baby before, and women who are breastfeeding, but ask your doctor if it is suitable for you. It is also useful for women who have heavy periods because it tends to make periods shorter and lighter (and can often stop periods altogether). This is not harmful in any way to your body.

Who Should Not Use This Type Of IUD?

You should not use it if you could be pregnant. There are some medical conditions that you may have which could prevent you from using the Progestogen IUD. It is very important to talk with your doctor to be sure it is safe for you to use it.

Are there any side effects

Women may have irregular bleeding and spotting in the first few months after the hormone-releasing IUD is inserted. Bleeding usually settles down and periods become shorter and lighter and often women will have no periods at all.

Some women may experience hormonal side effects, such as bloating or skin changes, but this is uncommon because the dose of hormone is so small.

There is a small chance of getting a pelvic infection at the time of the IUD insertion.

The doctor or nurse will tell you about other risks of having the IUD inserted.

How Do You Get The Hormone-releasing IUD?

You need to go to a doctor or Family Planning Clinic. You may be asked to make two visits. On the first visit the doctor asks questions about your health and tells you about the IUD. You will have a vaginal/pelvic examination, and possibly a test for vaginal infection. On the second visit the IUD is inserted. Your doctor or nurse will explain the procedure to you. It takes about 10 minutes and some women may find the experience uncomfortable while others may find it quite painful. It is a good idea to take simple pain tablets before the procedure. You do not have to fast before having the IUD put in, in fact it is a good idea to eat beforehand. You may feel faint during or after the insertion and you will probably need to rest for a while before you leave the clinic. You should allow about an hour to be at the clinic.

www.fpnsw.org.au | [talkline 1300 658 886](tel:1300658886) | [bookshop](#)

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Family Planning NSW is a not-for-profit organisation funded by the NSW Ministry of Health

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How Is The Hormone-releasing IUD Taken Out?

You need to go to a doctor or Family Planning Clinic to have it taken out. The doctor uses a special instrument to remove the IUD by gently pulling on the string. This only takes a couple of minutes. Some women find it a little uncomfortable and some don't feel much at all.

Things To Remember

Feel inside your vagina with your finger to check for the string each month after a period to be sure the IUD is in place.

If you have any unusual symptoms including a discharge from your vagina, pain low in your abdomen or deep pain during intercourse, see your doctor straight away.

If you are concerned that you could be pregnant, see your doctor or clinic for a pregnancy test. But remember, you can miss periods with the hormone-releasing IUD.

If you, or your partner, ever have casual sex, or if you have a new sexual partner, use a condom every time until you both have been checked for sexually transmissible infections (STIs).

Keep a record of the date for replacement because an IUD should not stay in for longer than the recommended time.

For Further Information

- Contact the Family Planning NSW Talkline on 1300 658 886 or go to www.fpnsw.org.au/talkline
- NRS (for deaf) 133 677
- Or visit your nearest Family Planning clinic

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