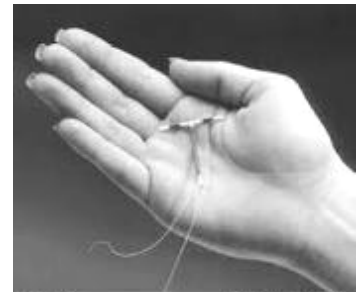




The copper IUD is a birth control method. It is a small, plastic T-shaped device with a copper wire wrapped around it. It prevents pregnancy by stopping sperm from fertilizing an egg. A health care provider must insert the IUD in your uterus.

### Benefits:

- The IUD works all the time it is inside you. You don't have to remember birth control each time you have sex. You have to check the strings each month to be sure it is still in place.
- It works up to 5 years or until it is removed by a health care provider.
- It prevents pregnancy 99% of the time. You can get pregnant once the IUD is removed.
- It does not contain hormones. It does not change the timing of your regular menstrual cycle.



### Risks and disadvantages:

- The copper IUD does not protect you against sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV. You need to use condoms to protect against STIs and HIV.
- The copper IUD might make your periods heavier. You may also have more cramps during your period.
- Most women feel some pain and cramping while an IUD is being inserted.
- If you can take ibuprofen (Motrin™, Advil™) or naproxen (Aleve™), you may take 200-400 mgs one hour before your appointment. If you can't to take ibuprofen or naproxen you may take acetaminophen (Tylenol™).
- Complications are rare but can happen. These include:
  - irregular bleeding or spotting between periods
  - making a small hole in the uterus when it is inserted (0.1%)
  - infection (most likely during the first month) (0.1-1%)
  - the IUD coming part or all the way out of the uterus (3-10%) [1]
  - If you become pregnant while an IUD is in place, the pregnancy may be outside the uterus. This can be very dangerous. **If you have an IUD and think you are pregnant, it is important to see a health care provider as soon as possible.**

### **To be sure an IUD is for you:**

- Read the IUD information we give you.
- Learn about the risks and benefits. If you aren't sure, ask the health care provider.
- You must be comfortable with putting a finger into your vagina to check for the string after every period or once a month. You can also ask your partner to do this.
- Understand that your periods might change. You may have irregular bleeding, heavier periods, longer periods, or more cramping during your period.

### **To make an appointment to have an IUD inserted:**

- We will insert the IUD during your period.
- Call the clinic at 947-1517 on the day your period starts. We will do our best to make an appointment to insert the IUD during that period or your next one.
- Your appointment will take about 40 minutes.

### **For more information, visit the following websites:**

- The Canadian Federation for Sexual Health: [www.cfsh.ca](http://www.cfsh.ca)
- Society for Obstetricians and Gynaecologists of Canada: [www.sexualityandu.ca](http://www.sexualityandu.ca)
- Sexuality Education Resource Centre: [www.serc.mb.ca](http://www.serc.mb.ca)
- Up To Date: [www.uptodate.com](http://www.uptodate.com)

### **References:**

[1] Gillian Dean and Alisa B Goldberg, *Management of problems related to interuterine contraception*, Uptodate.com. Reviewed Sept 23, 2010.

**Disclaimer:** We provide this health information for your learning only. It should not be used to replace a visit with a health care provider.

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