

Advice for Copper Intrauterine Device (Cu-IUD) Users

Post-insertion advice for users

You have been fitted with a device

Date of fitting

Date of removal/replacement

*The Adam Practice want to
acknowledge Dorset Healthcare
University Foundation Trust in giving
us permission to use an adapted
version of their patient information
leaflet*



What can I expect after a device is fitted?

After insertion you are likely to experience vaginal bleeding or staining. The duration of this initial bleeding is very variable and can sometimes persist until the next period. You may have some period type pain or cramps for a few days. Take any simple painkiller that you would take for period pain.

How soon does the device work?

You can rely on your device for contraception as soon as it is fitted. However, the process of Cu-IUD insertion interferes with the protective mechanism of the cervix which prevents infection. Therefore, we recommend abstinence or condom use for the first 7 days after insertion.

When can I use tampons?

DO NOT USE tampons for 4 weeks after insertion as this is believed to reduce the risk of infection. After the first month you can use tampons but beware of getting your Cu-IUD threads caught in the tampon when you remove it. Prolonged use of the same tampon (more than 12 hours) is not advised due to risk of toxic shock.

How will I know the Cu-IUD is still in place?

Inspect pads/tampons during a period to check that the device has not been expelled. It is important to feel for Cu-IUD threads so that you can check the Cu-IUD is still in place. The best time to check is usually after a period because it is during periods that the Cu-IUD is most likely to fall out. If the threads are felt by your partner, they can be cut shorter, but it is advisable to have your Cu-IUD checked at the surgery in case it is falling out.

Is there a risk of infection?

There is a small risk of infection during the first 2-3 weeks after fitting. You should report immediately to The Adam Practice if you develop an offensive vaginal discharge, pelvic pain or a temperature greater than 38.5 degrees centigrade or rigors/shivers. It is important to understand that the Cu-IUD offers no protection against any sexually transmitted infection. Therefore, it is advisable that condoms are used for safer sex, especially if in a new relationship.

What will happen to my menstrual periods?

Menstrual periods may be heavier, more painful and last longer.

How long can a device stay in place?

Most Cu-IUDs can stay in place for 5-10 years depending on the type of device, the doctor or nurse will advise you. If you have had a Cu-IUD fitted after your 40th birthday it does not need to be changed unless you are having problems with it. Once your periods have stopped for a year after the age of 50 or for 2 years if under the age of 50, you are post-menopausal and we recommend you have the Cu-IUD removed as you no longer need this for contraception.

When my Cu-IUD is due for replacement:

We will give you a card with the date when the Cu-IUD is due for replacement. Please book an appointment with us 1-2 months before this date.

What happens if I get pregnant?

The Cu-IUD should normally be removed in early pregnancy to prevent miscarriage. Pregnancies that occur with a Cu-IUD in place might be ectopic, a potentially dangerous condition. Therefore, if you think you might be pregnant report immediately to The Adam Practice.

How often do I need to come back?

Routine check-ups are not required. However, we advise that within a few weeks of having the Cu-IUD placed, you check to make sure you can feel the treads. If you are not able to feel the treads, or if you develop any problems as listed below, please contact the Adam Practice for review.

What problems should I be concerned about?

Please contact the surgery or see a healthcare professional if:

- You have lower abdominal or pelvic pain (especially if any post-insertion pain initially improved)
- You have offensive vaginal discharge
- You miss a period or have an unusually light bleed only
- You are worried that your device is coming out
- You have pain during sexual intercourse
- You develop irregular bleeding
- You are worried that your threads are missing or can feel the hard end of the coil. If this has happened either abstain from intercourse or use a condom until a healthcare professional has checked the position of the coil. If you have had unprotected sex in the last 5 days prior to this change, please contact The Adam Practice as soon as possible as you may require emergency contraception.

When can I go swimming?

To reduce the risk of infection, wait 3 days after Cu-IUD insertion before going to a public swimming pool.

When can I go to the gym?

A Cu-IUD will not be expelled by vigorous aerobic exercise so you can resume any fitness regimen when you feel ready. However, it is probably best to avoid vibrating gym plates.



THE ADAM PRACTICE

What about menstrual cups?

Use of menstrual cups can possibly increase the risk of a Cu-IUD expulsion. It is important to follow the manufacture's instructions relating to use of menstrual cups.

How is it taken out?

A trained doctor or nurse can take out the device at any time. However, if you do not want to become pregnant, we would advise you to abstain from intercourse, or use extra precautions e.g. condoms, for 7 days before the device is removed. Your usual fertility returns as soon as the device is taken out.

Does the Cu IUD need to be removed before Magnetic Resonance Imaging?

Not usually. However, you must inform the radiographer that you have a Cu-IUD.



THE ADAM PRACTICE