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**Coil Appointment  
&  
Information Pack**



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You have been given an appointment for a coil fitting:

This is a 20-30 minutes appointment with the specialist. Please **arrive 10 minutes** early ready for your appointment.

In the enclosed pack, we have provided some information to prepare you for your appointment. Please read this before your appointment. **Please also read and sign the consent form before you attend for your appointment.**

We request that you let us know as soon as possible if you are unable to attend so that we can offer this appointment to another patient. Please note that if you do not attend, there may be at least a 6-week delay until another appointment becomes available.

We look forward to seeing you.

Yours sincerely

**Dr McQuillan and Berkshire Menopause Clinic team**

# The Intra-Uterine System (IUS) 'Levonorgestrel Coil' Patient Leaflet

This leaflet aims to answer your questions about the intra uterine system (IUS), known as a hormonal coil. It explains the benefits, risks and alternatives, as well as what to expect when you come to the clinic.

## What is the IUS?

The IUS is a small plastic T-shaped device containing progestogen hormone (levonorgestrel). It is fitted into the womb where the hormone is released slowly over a few years. It has two fine threads that come through the cervix (neck of the womb) opening and rest at the top of the vagina, in order to be checked and removed when necessary. One commonly used brand of coil is a Mirena. There are alternative devices available (different sizes, strengths, and duration of use), which you may wish to discuss.

## What is the IUS used for and what are the benefits?

### ▪ Long term contraception

The hormonal coil is widely used as a long-term reversible contraceptive and can be left in place for up to eight years (or longer if you are over the age of 45). It is one of the best forms of contraception, with only two in 1,000 women getting pregnant (0.2%)

Should you wish to get pregnant, fertility with the coil returns to 'your normal' once the coil is removed.

### ▪ Heavy, painful periods

Some higher dose levonorgestrel coils, such as Mirena, are used as a treatment for heavy periods and can reduce period bleeding by up to 90%. In addition, up to 50% of women will have no periods after one year of use. The hormonal coil has been successfully used to reduce period pains and is a known treatment for conditions such as endometriosis.

### ▪ HRT

Higher dose levonorgestrel coils, such as Mirena, can be used as part of HRT to provide womb lining protection. Most benefits of HRT come from oestrogen, however, if given alone, it causes thickening of the lining of the womb leading to irregular bleeding and other problem.

Many women are unaware that they may still need contraception even if they are taking HRT (this should be discussed with your GP). A further advantage is that this type of coil is the only 'progesterone part' of HRT that can double up as contraception.

### ▪ Avoiding surgery

It is much safer to insert a coil than to have surgery for heavy periods, or a sterilisation for contraception.

### ▪ Medication interaction

The hormonal coil is not affected by other medicines and is safe to use whilst breastfeeding.

## What are the risks?

### ▪ Difficulty with insertion

Occasionally, there can be difficulties for example if your cervix is tightly closed. This is more common in those who have had surgery to the cervix, or not had children vaginally. Your doctor may be able use equipment to help open the cervix. If this is not possible you may need to be referred to the hospital to have it fitted.

### ▪ Perforation

Rarely, the coil might go through the wall of the womb. This risk may be higher if breastfeeding. One sign maybe pain, but often there are no symptoms and the womb will heal by itself.

### ▪ Expulsion

Rarely, the coil may be pushed out of the womb or displaced. Your nurse will teach you how to check your threads are in the correct place, which you should do every few months.

### ▪ Infection

There's a small chance of getting a pelvic infection during the first few weeks after an IUS is put in.

### ▪ Ectopic pregnancy

The coil is very effective, and it is unlikely you'll get pregnant. If you do, there's a small increased risk of it developing outside the womb.

### **Are there side effects?**

Side effects are more common within the first few months and generally settle after continued use.

- **Hormonal**  
These may include breast tenderness, headaches, acne and symptoms similar to PMS.
- **Bleeding problems**  
Some women may experience changes to their bleeding patterns. This usually settles by 3-6 months. We encourage you to persevere and speak to your GP if you find this difficult.
- **Ovarian cysts**  
Occasionally, women may develop functional or simple ovarian cysts (small fluid filled sacs on the ovaries), which are not dangerous. They usually cause no symptoms and go away on their own.

### **Am I suitable for the IUS hormonal coil?**

There are some women for whom the IUS is not suitable. This will be assessed at the time of counselling. In particular, please inform us if you have any of the following:

- allergy to progesterone/levonorgestrel
- suspected pregnancy
- unexplained vaginal bleeding
- pelvic inflammatory disease (current or within the last three months)
- changes to the shape of the womb
- ablation or resection of the womb lining (in this case, procedure should be done in a hospital setting)

### **How can I prepare for having an IUS fitted?**

- **Timing of fitting**  
An IUS can be put in at any time in your menstrual cycle. If fitted in the first seven days of your menstrual cycle, you do not require any further contraception. If fitted at any other time, you will need additional contraception for the first seven days.
- **Ensuring you are not pregnant**  
Prior to having your IUS fitted, you will need to ensure you use adequate, reliable contraception or do not have sexual intercourse from your last period. Please inform us if there is a possibility you are pregnant.
- **Previous infections**  
Your nurse will check if you are at risk of infections including previous sexually transmitted infections or a new partner within the last 12 months. We may recommend you have a sexual health screen/ vaginal swabs prior to your coil fitting.
- **Heart conditions**  
Tell your nurse/doctor if you have an abnormal heart valve, as you might need antibiotics to cover the insertion procedure.
- **Pain relief**  
You may feel pain during and after the fitting. We would suggest that you take some painkillers about an hour before you have the IUS fitted.
- **Contraception**  
It is important to have prior alternate contraception arranged in case the device cannot be fitted.

### **What happens during the IUS fitting?**

Your appointment will last 20–30 minutes. We will check that you have understood all the information provided and you will be asked to sign a consent form.

The doctor will examine you internally to check the position and size of your uterus before inserting your coil.

Before you leave, you will see the nurse and be given an 'aftercare' leaflet.

You may want to bring a chaperone as some women experience cramps and slight bleeding after the procedure.

***If you have any further questions, please phone or email the clinic to arrange a consultation with our specialist.***

# IUCD/IUS 'coil' aftercare sheet

## Do I need extra contraception after my fitting?

This should have been discussed at your coil fitting. In general:

- Copper coil: This is effective immediately and requires no extra protection
- Day 1-7 of cycle or replacement IUS coil (within the recommended life span): no extra precaution required
- >Day 7 of cycle or previously using contraceptive pill: Start/ continue contraception for 7 days

## How should I feel afterwards?

- Most women experience some period-like discomfort for 24-48 hours after fitting, but then this usually settles. Take simple painkillers such as paracetamol and/or ibuprofen if safe to do so.
- For the first 3-6 months, there may be change in bleeding patterns. Some women may also experience hormonal changes e.g. breast tenderness, headaches, acne, PMS like symptoms, low libido. After this, many women have no/lighter periods and reduced hormonal side effects.

## What if I feel unwell after?

- If you feel unwell within the first 20 days (high fever; severe lower abdominal pain; smelly discharge) there may be an infection or perforation.
- In addition, it is important you take a pregnancy test, as rarely, if you become pregnant with a coil, it can be outside the womb (ectopic).

If you get any above symptoms, it is important you make an urgent appointment to be assessed.

## Is it safe to use tampons?

- Yes, it's safe to use tampons or a menstrual cup. Take care not to pull on the coil threads when you're removing tampons or a menstrual cup.

## Checking my threads

- It is advisable for you or your partner to feel for your threads once a month. Ideally this should be after a period.
- Your threads should not be uncomfortable for you or your partner. If they feel too long, make an appointment to have them trimmed.
- If you cannot feel the threads, you should use a condom or abstain from sexual intercourse, and make an appointment to come to the surgery, as the coil may have become dislodged (expelled).

## In the case of an emergency

**Please note our services are not suitable for any urgent or emergency medical situation or treatment. If you are in an emergency situation (or you think there is the opportunity for the situation to escalate to one), you must contact your local NHS emergency services by dialling 999 or seek other emergency medical services. The services at BMC are in no way designed or intended to replace the services of the NHS or services provided by your GP.**