



Copper IUD Fact Sheet

How does the copper IUD work? The copper IUD is a T-shaped plastic rod with some portion covered with exposed copper that stays in your uterus. It releases small amounts of copper. Copper kills sperm. Without live sperm, you cannot get pregnant. No method of birth control is 100% effective. The copper IUD is over 99% effective.

AFTER THE COPPER IUD IS INSERTED, WHEN CAN I HAVE SEX?

You must wait 24 hours after the IUD is placed before you can use tampons or have sex.

WHEN DOES THE COPPER IUD START WORKING?

The copper IUD works right after it is placed in you. It may be inserted up to 5 days after unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy.

HOW LONG DOES THE COPPER IUD LAST?

The copper IUD works for 10-12 years.

WHAT DO I NEED TO DO AFTER I HAVE THE IUD INSERTED?

Some women like to check their IUD's string after each period. To check, insert a finger into your vagina and feel for the cervix (it feels like the tip of your nose). You should feel the string near your cervix. **Do not** pull on the string.

WHAT DO I DO IF AND WHEN I DECIDE TO GET PREGNANT?

When you are ready, your health care provider will remove your IUD. Most women get pregnant soon after removal.

HOW DOES THE COPPER IUD HELP ME?

- You do not need to think about birth control before or during sex
- You do not need refills (as you do for the pill)
- You can use the copper IUD while breastfeeding
- The copper IUD costs less than most types of birth control.

HOW WILL I FEEL HAVING THE IUD IN ME? HOW WILL MY BODY CHANGE?

You will not feel the IUD in you. You may have cramps and heavy periods. Ibuprofen can help. You can take up to 4 pills (800 mg) of Ibuprofen every 8 hours with food. To prevent cramps, take Ibuprofen when your period starts and keep taking it every 8 hours for the first 2-3 days of your period. You can also put a hot water bottle on your belly if you have bad cramps.

DOES THE COPPER IUD HAVE RISKS?

The copper IUD is very safe. Serious problems are rare. If you have the following symptoms within the first 3 weeks after the IUD is inserted, see your health care provider:

- Fever above 101°F
- Chills
- Strong pain in your belly

Remember, the copper IUD does not protect you from Sexually Transmitted Infections or HIV. Always use condoms to protect yourself!