

What is the progesterone IUD?

The Mirena and Skyla are types of intrauterine device (IUD), which is placed inside the uterus to prevent pregnancy. The Mirena IUD lasts for up to 5 years, and is one of the most effective forms of birth control. The Skyla IUD lasts for up to 3 years.

How do they work?

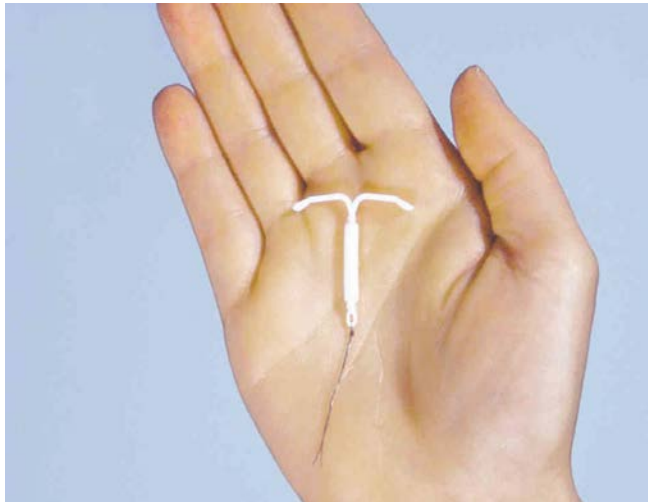
The progesterone IUD is one of two IUD types available in the United States. The other IUD is the non-hormonal copper IUD (ParaGard). The IUD slowly releases one hormone, a progestin (levonorgestrel). This hormone makes your cervical mucus thicker, so the sperm can't get to the egg. It may also stop your ovary from releasing an egg. The hormone stays localized to your uterus, rather than going throughout your body.

How effective is the progesterone IUD?

The IUD is one of the most effective forms of birth control. The effectiveness of the IUD is greater than 99%. Less than one woman out of 100 will get pregnant using it. Perfect use is the same as typical use, since the IUD requires no effort to keep using – it is “forgettable” contraception.

How to use the progesterone IUD

If you decide on the IUD, your doctor will do a pelvic exam, check for gonorrhea and Chlamydia, and place the device into your uterus. **You should expect some cramping when the IUD is first placed,**



which gets better with ibuprofen or Motrin.

When the IUD needs to be removed, your doctor gently withdraws it by pulling on the IUD string. In rare instances the strings on the device may break, making IUD removal a more complicated procedure. After removal, you can get pregnant right away.

Your IUD has a string or "tail" which is made of plastic thread and hangs out of your cervix into your vagina. You cannot see this string, and it will not cause problems when you have sex. Check for the string after each monthly period. You may not be protected against pregnancy if you cannot feel the string or if you feel plastic.

To check for your IUD:

- Wash your hands with soap and warm water.
- Bend your knees and squat low to the ground. Gently put your index (pointing) finger high inside your vagina. The cervix is at the top of the vagina and feels like the tip of your nose.
- Find the IUD string coming from your cervix. Never pull on the string. You should **not** be able to feel the firm plastic of the IUD itself. Wash your hands after you are done checking your IUD.

Are there any side effects or risks?

The IUD is one of the safest forms of birth control, and women generally have no problems with it. You

should expect some changes in your period – many women have heavier bleeding for the first 3-6 months, which then becomes lighter. About half of women stop having any periods at all. There is also a small risk of the IUD migrating into your uterine wall (perforation), which is less than 1 in 1000, and a small risk of the IUD falling out.

Serious side effects are very rare, but ectopic pregnancies are a serious concern. They can be life-threatening. Women who use IUDs are much **less** likely to have an ectopic pregnancy than women who are not using birth control. But if a woman does become pregnant while using an IUD, it is more likely to be ectopic than if she was not using the IUD. For this reason, if you have new pain in your belly, unusual bleeding, or feel faint, you should contact your doctor right away.

If you have an abnormally-shaped uterus, the IUD may not work for you.

The IUD: Pros and Cons

The IUD is a long-lasting, safe and reversible method of birth control, but no birth control is perfect. To help you decide if it's right for you, keep the following in mind:

The IUD does NOT cause abortions.

The IUD does NOT increase your risk of ectopic pregnancy.

The IUD does NOT cause infertility.

The IUD does NOT increase your risk of sexually transmitted diseases or PID in the long term.

The IUD is NOT limited to women who are married or already have children.

The IUD is an excellent method for teens and adolescents.

How much does the IUD cost?

The IUD may cost \$400-800 up front, but lasts for 5 years. Your insurance may cover the entire cost of the IUD. There are available programs that provide IUDs at NO COST if you do not have insurance coverage. Please ask your clinic about them.

For more information, please visit these websites:

www.larcfirst.com

www.choiceproject.wustl.edu

www.bedsider.org