

Mirena Intra Uterine System (Mirena Coil)

What is the Mirena Coil?

The Mirena Coil is an effective, long term, and reversible method of contraception. It also has the benefit of dramatically reducing menstrual (blood) loss in most women, so it can be used as a treatment for heavy periods.

It consists of a small, plastic T-shaped frame which is inserted into the womb. This carries the hormone (progestogen) in a sleeve around its stem, and has two fine threads attached to the base.



How effective is it?

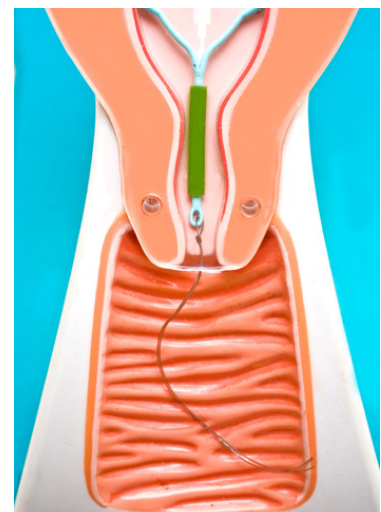
As a method of contraception, it is very reliable. The failure rate is one in 1000 (female sterilisation failure rate is one in 200) and you are protected from pregnancy as soon as the device is fitted. What happens to my periods?

Many women have spotting or light bleeding, in addition to their periods, for the first three to six months after the device is fitted. Some women may have heavy or prolonged bleeding during this time. However, usually from the fifth month onwards a profound reduction in duration and amount of bleeding is normal.

About four in 10 women stop having periods after the first year of use. One study looking at women who were on a waiting list to have a hysterectomy for heavy periods, found that two in three women who were fitted with a Mirena Coil cancelled their surgery because they were satisfied with the treatment.

Can any woman use it?

Most women can use the Mirena Coil but it will not be suitable for everyone. It is licensed for both a contraceptive and a treatment for heavy periods, so it can be used by any woman who is potentially fertile. Arrangements however, can still be made to fit the coil to a woman who has been sterilised.



How long does it work?

The system is effective for five years.

How is it fitted?

It is fitted into the womb through the vagina by a doctor or specially trained nurse. Most women find that fitting causes only a little discomfort, which may be followed by some cramping for a few hours. It can be done by your family doctor or in a family planning clinic.

When is it fitted?

It is usually fitted during your period or within seven days of the start of it. It may also be fitted six weeks after giving birth, or immediately following a miscarriage or termination of pregnancy.

How long does the fitting take?

Preparations usually take about five minutes, but the actual fitting of the system only takes a few seconds.

Can I change my mind?

You can ask your doctor to remove the device at any time; the removal is easy. If you want to become pregnant your usual level of fertility will return very quickly after your device is removed. If you are not planning a baby then it is important to use another reliable method of contraception in the weeks leading up to its removal, otherwise pregnancy could happen.

Can I become pregnant with the system in place?

It is very rare for a woman to become pregnant whilst using the device. There have been no pregnancies in women using the device who do not have periods.

Can it get dislodged or fall out?

This is unlikely, but should the device come out either completely or partially, you are not protected against pregnancy. Signs of this are an increase in the amount of bleeding during a period (or return of periods). If you think it has come out, use another reliable method of contraception until you see your doctor.

How can I check to see if it is in place?

After each period or about once a month, you can feel for the two fine threads that pass from the device through the cervix into your vagina. Tell your doctor if you cannot feel them or if you or your partner feels any discomfort during sex. The threads can be adjusted if necessary.

Will I put on weight?

The Mirena Coil should not cause any change in your weight.

What about the side effects?

The level of hormone in the woman's blood stream is much lower than with the pill, so side effects such as tender breasts, headaches, and acne are less likely. If they occur they usually settle within a few months.

What about other complications?

The Mirena Coil should not increase your risk of either pelvic infection or ectopic pregnancy. Please ask if you have any other questions.

Other uses:

A Mirena Coil can be fitted at the time of a caesarean section. Please ask a member of staff if you want more information on this.

Sources:

1. NHS Foundation Trust