NHS
Lancashire Teaching Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Information for patients and carers

Intrauterine System (Mirena® and Levosert®)

What is an intrauterine system?

An intrauterine system (IUS) is a small T-shaped device that sits in the womb. It is coated with the hormone progesterone. Primarily it is used for contraception. It can also be used to treat heavy periods or as part of hormone replacement therapy (HRT).

As the hormone is released locally, into the womb, women experience fewer side effects compared to taking progesterone tablets (mini pill).

The brands used in this hospital are Mirena® and Levosert®

How well does it work?

Contraception

- 99% effective at preventing pregnancy
- Does not protect against sexually transmitted infections
- Not altered by medications, sickness or diarrhoea
- Reversible – fertility returns once removed

Control of bleeding

- 8 out of 10 women have lighter bleeding or no bleeding by 6 months from insertion
- Pain associated with heavy bleeding is also improved

Can anyone use an IUS?

The majority of women can have an IUS however you may be advised not to if you:

- Think you might already be pregnant
- Have recently given birth (usually wait 4-6 weeks)
- Have an untreated sexually transmitted infection
- Have a history of breast cancer

How is it inserted?

The IUS can be inserted at any point in your cycle as long as you are not pregnant and have used contraception for the 5 days before insertion.

During your clinic appointment:

- You will be asked to undress from the waist down; you will be given a sheet to cover yourself with
- The clinicians will prepare the equipment needed
- The clinician will examine you with a speculum (like a smear test)
- A small instrument will be passed through your cervix (neck of the womb) to assess the size of your womb. This may be slightly uncomfortable but manageable
- The IUS will then be placed into your uterus
- The threads will be cut and the speculum removed

Insertion usually takes no longer than 10 minutes.

We can use a local anaesthetic for insertion though this is not usually needed. Please discuss this with the clinician in clinic.

What are the side effects or risk?

During Insertion

Pain — The majority of women have an IUS fitted without experiencing significant pain. However, for some women it can be uncomfortable. We therefore advise you to take paracetamol or ibuprofen (as your allergies allow) an hour before your procedure.

Dizziness — Manipulation of the cervix (neck of the womb) can cause dizziness in some women. This is temporary and you will be observed in clinic until you feel back to normal.

Perforation — This is a small hole made in the womb at the time of insertion. The risk is very low but if it does occur you may need surgery to remove the IUS.

After Insertion

Infection	There is a very small risk of a pelvic infection in the first 20 days after insertion. Contact your GP if you experience offensive discharge or pelvic pain.
Hormone effects	17 in 100 women experience headaches, oily skin, breast tenderness, nausea or mood swings. These symptoms only usually last for 3 months. **The IUS does not usually cause weight gain.**
Expelled	1 in 20 IUS can be pushed out (expelled). This is most likely to happen in the first month. We advise you to check for the threads at the top of the vagina every month to ensure it is still in place. If you cannot feel the threads, please see your GP/practice nurse and use alternative contraception until you have seen them.
Lost Threads	1 in 100 women experience lost threads. The threads can be drawn up into the neck of the womb. This may make changing the IUS more challenging however, as long as the coil is present it will be effective for contraception and managing bleeding. To confirm the coil is still present your GP may organise an ultrasound scan. Please use additional contraception until the location of the IUS is confirmed.
Ectopic pregnancy	If you do become pregnant with the IUS the risk of an ectopic pregnancy is slightly higher. This is where the pregnancy develops outside the uterus and can have potentially severe consequences. We advise you to contact your GP if you become pregnant with an IUS in place.

When to call for help after insertion

Heavy vaginal bleeding

Continuous lower abdominal pain

Offensive vaginal discharge

Please contact the gynaecology assessment unit (GAU) or your GP.

After insertion

You can go home immediately:

If the IUS is inserted during the first 7 days of your cycle it is immediately effective as contraception. If it is fitted at any other time then use additional contraception for 7 days.

You may experience irregular bleeding or spotting for 6-8 weeks following insertion; this is normal.

You may also experience the occasional brief period type pain during this time again, this is normal.

You can use tampons once the IUS has been in place for 3 weeks.

Does it interfere with sex?

Neither you nor your partner should be able to feel the IUS threads during intercourse.

Removal

The IUS can be removed in most GP or sexual health clinics by pulling on the threads during a vaginal examination. Removal is not usually painful.

The device can remain in place for up to 8 years, but this depends on the brand and the reason for insertion. Your doctor will advise on this for you.

Contact details

Should you require further advice or information please discuss with the nurse or doctor looking after you.

Should you require urgent advice following insertion please contact the Gynaecology Assessment Unit (GAU): **01772 524415.**

Sources of further information

www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk
www.nhs.uk
www.accessable.co.uk
www.patient.co.uk
www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/veteran-aware
https://bepartofresearch.nihr.ac.uk/

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www.lancsteachinghospitals.nhs.uk/patient-information-leaflets

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If you want to stop smoking, you can also contact Smokefree Lancashire on Freephone **08081962638**

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This information can be made available in large print, audio, Braille and in other languages.

Our patient information group review our leaflets regularly, if you feel you would like to feedback on this information or join our reading group please contact on email address:
patientexperienceandinvolvem@LTHTR.nhs.uk

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