

All about the IUD (intrauterine device)

The IUD is a small piece of plastic placed in your uterus to keep you from getting pregnant.

The IUD keeps the man's sperm from meeting the woman's egg. IUDs have either copper or a hormone to help them work.

There are two kinds of IUDs.

Both kinds of IUDs work well.

- ◆ One IUD (hormonal) works for up to **5 years**. After a few months, women have lighter and fewer periods than they did before, with less cramping. Periods may even stop.
- ◆ The other IUD (copper) can be used for up to **10 years**. Women who use this IUD may have heavier bleeding and cramping during their periods, but no side effects from hormones.

Talk to your Family PACT provider about which IUD would be best for you.

How well does the IUD work?

The IUD is very good at preventing pregnancy.

Only 1 out of 100 women who use an IUD for one year may get pregnant.

How do I get an IUD?

You must go to a specially trained clinician. He/she can put the IUD in your uterus any time of the month, even during your period.

What do women like about using it?

- ◆ Once the IUD is in place, the woman doesn't have to do anything else to keep from getting pregnant.
- ◆ It's a method you can use without others knowing it.

What do some women dislike?

- ◆ Some women have cramping and bleeding, and perhaps a backache, for a few minutes or hours after the IUD is put in.
- ◆ Some women have more bleeding and cramping during their periods with the copper IUD during early use.

How is the IUD put in?

A clinician uses a very thin plastic tube to slip the IUD into your uterus.

- ◆ It slips through your vagina and cervix, the opening to the uterus.
- ◆ The IUD stays in your uterus.
- ◆ The clinician takes the thin tube out.
- ◆ It takes just a few minutes.
- ◆ When it is put in, it may be uncomfortable, or even a little painful for a little while.

Make the IUD work for you.

There will be a short string or two that you can feel.

- ◆ Check the string each month to make sure the IUD is in place.
- ◆ To feel the string, put your finger into your vagina as far as you can.

Remember:

- ◆ You can ask your Family PACT provider to take the IUD out at any time.

Are there problems with using it?

- ◆ The IUD won't stay in some women's bodies.
- ◆ Women who use the hormonal IUD may have headaches, mood changes, or tender breasts. These problems may last for up to 6 months.

The IUD may not be safe for some women.

Talk to your Family PACT provider about any health problems you may have. For example:

- ◆ If you have had an infection of the uterus or tubes in the last three months.
- ◆ If you have vaginal bleeding for no known reason.
- ◆ If you have cancer.

Watch for these warning signs.

Call your Family PACT provider right away if:

- ◆ Your string feels longer or shorter.
- ◆ You can feel part of the IUD coming through your cervix.
- ◆ You miss your period or think you might be pregnant.
- ◆ You have cramping or heavy bleeding.
- ◆ You have chills or fever.
- ◆ You have a discharge from your vagina that is not normal.

**The IUD does not
protect you from HIV
(the virus that causes AIDS)
or other diseases people get from
having sex.**

Use condoms (for men or women)
when you have sex
to protect yourself from these diseases.