



Patient Information

Intrauterine Contraception (IUC) After your fitting appointment

What can you expect after your IUC fitting?

- It is common to experience some lower abdominal cramping following the procedure, and so it is recommended that you rest and continue to take regular pain relief, as per packet instructions, for the remainder of the day.
- You may also experience some vaginal spotting after the IUC fitting, and so you may wish to use a pad or panty-liner.
- These symptoms may continue for a few days. It may therefore be appropriate to continue pain relief for 24-48 hours following the procedure. If these symptoms worsen after this time, or do not improve, please contact the clinic for further advice.
- Your ongoing bleeding pattern will depend on the type of IUC fitted.
 - With the copper IUC, you may experience regular, but heavier, and sometimes more painful bleeds.
 - With the hormonal IUC, you may experience some irregular or prolonged vaginal bleeding after the IUC is fitted. This most commonly occurs in the first three-six months of use. It is usually light bleeding and most often improves.
 - If you are unhappy or concerned by your bleeding pattern, please book an appointment to see us. There are treatment options available to help.

How should you check for your IUC threads?

- It is recommended that you check for your IUC threads after each distinct bleed, or at least monthly if you do not bleed, or only experience occasional vaginal spotting.
- The easiest way to feel for your threads is in a squatting position, or with one foot raised on the side of, for example, the bath. Part your labia, which are the 'lips' of your vulva, and insert your index finger into your vagina. You might have to stretch your finger to reach it, but the cervix feels firm and rubbery, like the tip of your nose, and has a smooth surface. Once you have felt this, gently run your finger across the surface of your cervix to find the threads.



Intrauterine Contraception (IUC) After your fitting appointment

- If you cannot feel your threads, do not rely on the IUC as contraception – i.e. use another reliable method of contraception in addition – and contact the clinic for further advice.

What additional information do you need to remember about your IUC?

- Your IUC may not protect against pregnancy immediately. Discuss with your healthcare provider when you can begin to rely on your IUC to protect against pregnancy.
- Your IUC expiry will depend on the type of IUC you have chosen. Your healthcare provider will tell you how long your IUC will be effective at preventing pregnancy for. We will not send you a reminder that your IUC is due to expire, therefore it is important to keep your IUC card – with details of the IUC expiry date written on it – somewhere safe and memorable.
- Whilst the IUC can protect against pregnancy, it cannot protect against sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Using condoms and STI testing is recommended if you have a new sexual partner.
- You may be advised not to use tampons for one month following your IUC fitting.
- Many menstrual cups users continue to use their cup alongside an IUC. Please remember to insert the cup low in your vagina, and when breaking the seal be sure not to pull on the threads of your IUC. Please check the website of your menstrual cup provider for more specific advice.

When should you contact a healthcare professional after IUC fitting?

Routine follow-up is not required. However, you should contact the clinic, your General Practitioner, or call 111 promptly if:

- You experience persistent lower abdominal pain, pain during sex, abnormal vaginal discharge, or a fever.
- You experience prolonged abdominal pain or heavier than expected bleeding after the IUC is fitted.
- You think you may be pregnant.
- You cannot feel your IUC threads, or you think you can feel the stem of your IUC.
- You have any other concerns.

Reference: <https://www.fsrh.org/standards-and-guidance/documents/cec-ceu-guidance-implants-feb-2014/>



Intrauterine Contraception (IUC) After your fitting appointment

Contact Sexual Health Services

Telephone: 01793 604038

Website: www.swindonsexualhealth.nhs.uk/clinics

Opening times:

Monday 09.30-20.00

Tuesday 09.00-19.00

Wednesday 09.00-16.00

Thursday 09.00-19.00

Friday 08.30-11.00

Saturday 09.00-11.00

Smoking will not be permitted on any NHS site in England. Smoking will not be permitted within any of our buildings or anywhere outside on our sites. Smoking facilities will not be provided. Please be considerate of others when vaping in hospital grounds.

This information sheet is available to order in other languages and formats. If you would like a copy, please contact us on 01793 604031 or email gwh.pals@nhs.net

Document Control

Division: Integrated and community Care

Department: Sexual Health

Approved Date: 23 June 2022

Next Review Date: July 2025

Document Number: I&CC - PIL133