**What is the IUD?**
The IUD (Intrauterine Device) is a plastic rod with 2 arms and a string. It is inserted into the uterus to prevent pregnancy. It is about the size of a quarter. There are 5 types of IUD in the US: the copper IUD and 4 progestin (hormone) IUDs. To choose the right one for you, see the “Which IUD Is Right for Me?” chart on the other side.

**How well does the IUD work?**
The IUD works better than the pill, the patch, the ring, and the shot. The IUD prevents pregnancy more than 99% of the time.

**Is the IUD safe?**
Yes. Serious problems with the IUD are rare, and most happen the first few days.

**Can I get an IUD if I’ve never had a baby?**
Yes. IUDs are a great choice even if you have not had a baby.

**How is the IUD inserted?**
After putting a speculum in your vagina, a health care provider inserts the IUD into your uterus. Many providers give pain medicine first. You may have cramps and spotting for a short time afterwards.

**Does the IUD have side effects?**
Yes. Most side effects improve after a few months. See other side for details.

**Does the IUD cause infections?**
No.

**Does the IUD protect against HIV and other sexually transmitted infections?**
No, the IUD does not protect you from sexually transmitted infections. Unless you and your partner have sex only with each other, you should use a condom every time you have sex, even with the IUD in place.

**Do I need to check the IUD?**
No. Schedule a visit with your provider if you have any questions, want to change your method, or would like to have your IUD removed.

**Does the IUD cause an abortion?**
No. The IUD works by preventing sperm from fertilizing eggs.

**What happens when I want to get pregnant?**
Your health care provider can remove your IUD at any time. You can get pregnant right after the IUD is removed.
### Copper IUD

- **Brand names**: ParaGard®

- **When does the IUD start working?**
  - The copper IUD starts working right away.

- **How long can you use it?**
  - ParaGard® works for 12 years.
  - Your health care provider can remove your IUD at any time.

- **Does it contain hormones?**
  - No.

- **Side effects**
  - Heavier periods
  - Cramping for a few months after it is inserted
  - Stronger cramps with your period
  - Longer periods

- **Benefits**
  - No need to think about birth control before or during sex
  - Private
  - No need to buy refills every month
  - Works better than the pill, the patch, the ring, or the shot
  - Can be used while breastfeeding
  - Can be used as emergency contraception: Prevents pregnancy when inserted up to 5 days after unprotected sex

- **Cost**
  - The cost varies based on insurance coverage. Most insurance providers completely cover the cost the IUD.
  - If the IUD is not covered by your insurance, it may cost up to several hundred dollars.

### Progestin IUDs

- **Brand names**: Mirena®, Skyla®, Liletta®, and others

- **When does the IUD start working?**
  - The progestin IUDs start working 7 days after they are inserted.
  - Use condoms or another back-up method of birth control for the first 7 days after the IUD is inserted to prevent pregnancy.

- **How long can you use it?**
  - May be left in place from 3 to 7 years, depending on which IUD you choose.
  - Your health care provider can remove your IUD at any time.

- **Does it contain hormones?**
  - Yes. There is a low dose of progestin but no estrogen.

- **Side effects**
  - Spotting
  - Cramping for a few months after it is inserted
  - Lighter periods or no periods after a few months – this is safe.
  - Less common: bloating, nausea, headaches, breast pain

- **Benefits**
  - No need to think about birth control before or during sex
  - Private
  - No need to buy refills every month
  - Works better than the pill, the patch, the ring, or the shot
  - Can be used while breastfeeding
  - May decrease heavy periods, cramps, PMS

- **Cost**
  - The cost varies based on insurance coverage. Most insurance providers completely cover the cost of the IUD.
  - If the IUD is not covered by your insurance, it may cost up to several hundred dollars.