IUD Information

What is the IUD?	The IUD (Intrauterine Device) is a T-shaped plastic rod with thin strings coming out of your cervix. It is placed into the uterus to prevent pregnancy. It is about the size of a quarter. In the U.S., there are 2 types of copper IUDs and 4 hormonal (levonorgestrel) 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 is one of the most effective methods of birth control. You do not need to think about birth control before or during sex, and you don't need any refills. Less than one in 100 people using the IUD for a year get pregnant.
Is the IUD safe?	Yes. Serious problems with the IUD are rare, and most happen during the first few days. You can use any IUD while chest/breastfeeding.
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 the vagina, a clinician places the IUD in the uterus. Some clinicians give pain medicine first, but you should ask about what pain management options are available. You may have cramps and spotty periods for the first few months.
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. If you are looking for protection from sexually transmitted infections, the internal and external condom are great options.
Do I need to check the IUD?	No. You don't have to check your IUD. Some people like to check their IUD's string after each period. To check, insert a finger into your vagina and feel for the cervix (it feels like the tip of your nose). You should feel the string near your cervix. Do not pull on the string.
Does the IUD cause an abortion?	No. The IUD prevents sperm from fertilizing eggs.
How do I stop using the IUD?	Your clinician can remove the IUD at any time. If you prefer, you may remove the IUD yourself. After the IUD is removed, you can get pregnant right away.

Which IUD is right for me?

	Copper IUD	Hormonal IUDs	Hormonal IUDs
			
Brand names	Miudella®, ParaGard®	Mirena®, Liletta®	Kyleena®, Skyla®
When does the IUD start working?	The copper IUD starts working right away.	Mirena and Liletta start working right away.	• Kyleena and Skyla start working 7 days after they are placed in the uterus. • Use a back-up method (like condoms or abstinence) for 7 days.
How do you use it?	It must be placed in the uterus by a clinician. It's usually removed by a clinician, but some people prefer to remove the IUD themselves. It can be removed at any time.		
How long does it last?	The Miudella IUD works for 3 years. The ParagardIUD works for 12 years.	Mirena and Liletta work for 8 years.	• Skyla works for 3 years. • Kyleena works for 5 years.
Can I use it as Emergency Contraception (EC)?	The Paragard IUD also works as EC. It may be placed up to 5 days after having unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy. The Miudella IUD does not.	Yes, Mirena and Liletta may also work as EC. It may be placed up to 5 days after having unprotected sex to prevent pregnancy. But, there is more evidence of the use of Paragard IUDs as EC than hormonal IUDs.	No.
Does it contain hormones?	No.	Yes. There is a low dose of levonorgestrel, but no estrogen.	Yes. There is a very low dose of levonorgestrel, but no estrogen.
Effects on bleeding and cramps	• Heavier periods • Cramps for a few months after insertion • Stronger cramps with your period • Longer periods	• Spotting • Cramps for a few months after insertion • Lighter periods or no periods after a few months – this is safe.	• Spotting • Cramps for a few months after insertion • Lighter periods or no periods after a few months – this is safe.
Things to know	• May lower the risk of uterine lining cancer, ovarian cancer, and polycystic ovary syndrome. • Safe to use while breast/chestfeeding. • You can remove the IUD whenever you want. • You will not feel the IUD in you, though sometimes partners can feel it during sex. If this bothers you, you should talk with your clinician. • After you remove the IUD, you can get pregnant right away.		
Where can I get the IUD?	You can get the IUD at an appointment with a clinician.		
Cost	IUDs are covered by Medicaid and most health insurance plans. If the IUD is not covered by your insurance or you don't have insurance, it may cost hundreds of dollars. There may be family planning clinics in your area that can provide low-cost or free services.		