

Woman's Health Options

Copper Intrauterine Device (IUD)

What is a Copper IUD?

A Copper IUD is a small, soft piece of plastic wrapped in copper with nylon threads attached to it. The IUD is inserted into a woman's uterus and can stay in anywhere from 2.5 – 5 years. The copper changes the chemical environment in the uterus making it more difficult for the egg and sperm to survive. A doctor must insert and remove the IUD.

When the IUD is in place the threads are trimmed and will hang slightly outside the opening of the cervix and into the top of the vagina (see diagram).

Does it Work?

IUDs are 98% effective. This means that in one year 8 out of every 1000 women will get pregnant using a Copper IUD.

What are the Advantages?

An IUD is a convenient and long-term method of birth control. As mentioned it can stay in the uterus anywhere from 2.5 - 5 years but can be taken out by a doctor whenever you want.

Things to Think About:

With the Copper IUD, you may have:

- Cramps (especially with your period); for most women these get better after 3 – 6 months.
- About 5-15% of women have more bleeding during their periods.
- Sometimes light bleeding or spotting can happen between your periods.

During the first three months after the insertion, you can be at an increased risk of infection. IUDs do not prevent STIs so the use of condoms is recommended. An infection that is not treated and lasts an extended period of time may cause infertility or an ectopic pregnancy. The removal of the IUD and antibiotic treatment generally eliminates this problem.

See your doctor immediately if:

- You have signs of infection (fever, discharge, odor, pain),
- Or you miss your period.

Free condoms are available at the following:

- **Edmonton STI Clinic, General Hospital, 11111 Jasper Ave, Main Floor, Room 3B20**
- **Options Sexual Health Association, Suite 50 9912-106 St, Condoms are in the bathrooms and you can help yourself.**
- **Boyle McCauley Public Health Office, Lower Floor, 10628 – 96 Street**
- **HIV Edmonton, 9702 – 111 Avenue**

For More Information Call:

Woman's Health Options 780-484-1124
Or email Woman's Health Options at: nurses@whol.ca
counselor@whol.ca

The Birth Control Centre 780-735-0010
Options Sexual Health Association 780-423-3737
Calgary Sexual Health Clinic 403-944-7111
Red Deer 403-346-8336
Fort McMurray 780-791-6263

The Canadian Women's Health Network: www.cwhn.ca
Society of Obstetricians and Gynecologists of Canada: www.sexualityandu.ca