

Vancouver Island Women's Clinic

Patient Information: After care for Copper IUD

When does it start working? *Now! What? Yes!*

Copper IUDs even work as a "morning after device" for 5-7 days after unprotected sex. This is much, much better than "PlanB" pills.

Maintaining your IUD:

Today: Don't put anything inside for 24 hours
Why? Sex, tampons, swimming and bath/hot tubs could introduce bacteria from the vaginal canal to your uterus. While there isn't great medical evidence to clarify this, it seems reasonable to be safe.

This week: Check inside with one finger to see what's normal for you
Why? IUD string or strings are hard to feel when inside. Like the sample you received, it is only about 2cm long. Some women cannot feel their cervix or the string, and this is OK. Finding out what is normal for you will help you monitor your own IUD. Some IUDs have only one string, some have two. Some women like their sexual partner to check this for them

Next few months: Expect some slight changes

You might get irregular spotting and bleeding
Why? Copper IUD may take 2-3 months to settle, and part of the way they work is a low grade sterile irritation. When you have intercourse or exercise, you may notice some spotting or bleeding immediately or a few hours later. This is normal, and usually settles in a few months.

You might get slightly heavier periods with cramping
Why? You may take 2-3 periods to adjust to the copper IUD. Over time, your periods often return to normal, but first you may get 2-3 heavier ones. Ibuprofen, Tylenol, or whatever you generally use for periods should help.

Check inside with one finger to check it is the same
Why? Rarely, the copper IUD can slip (~5%). This is normal. If it fails (extremely rare) you would get other symptoms like breast tenderness and nausea. Checking yourself will give you confidence there's no change.

Every 2-3 years:

Unless you have a new sexual partner.....
What? If you have a new partner, you should check for STI and use a condom until your tests are negative. We can test you if you like
PAPs are now recommended at age 25, and then every 3 years.
Whoever does the pap can usually see the IUD string and check that your cervix is normal. We can do this for you.

Reasons to call the clinic:

- » If you think the IUD has fallen out. Do not have sex, or use a condom until we check
- » If cramping is very severe, keeping you awake at night or preventing you from work/school even after you have taken 800mg ibuprofen or another anti-inflammatory.