

The Intrauterine Device (IUD)



Liberte, Flexi-T, Nova-T



What is the intrauterine device?

The intrauterine device, or IUD, is a small, T-shaped plastic device wrapped in copper wire that is inserted in the uterus to prevent pregnancy. It provides 5-10 years of consistent birth control coverage. The IUD may also be known as "the copper IUD" or "non-hormonal IUD". It is a very effective, non-hormonal, and long-acting reversible form of contraceptive (LARC).



How does it work?

To prevent pregnancy, the copper wire on the IUD changes the conditions inside the uterus by thickening the cervical mucus and inhibiting sperm from reaching the uterus. The Copper IUD can also be used as an emergency contraceptive after unprotected sex.



How do I use the IUD?

The IUD needs to be inserted into the uterus by a doctor. The doctor will insert a speculum in to your vagina, measure your uterus, and insert the IUD through the cervix (the opening of the uterus.) The process is usually uncomfortable and you may feel some cramping, but the doctor may give you a local anesthetic/freezing agent to help with discomfort. Depending on which brand of IUD you receive, it can provide continuous birth control coverage **for 5-10 years**.



Where can I get the IUD? What is the cost?

A doctor can prescribe and insert the IUD for you. To receive an IUD you will typically require two appointments: one for a consultation, and the second for insertion. You will need to purchase your IUD at a pharmacy before your appointment. (Some clinics may offer the copper IUD for purchase at the clinic at the time of your insertion) The IUD costs **\$60-\$80** at most pharmacies. It is covered by most insurance plans.



Are there any side effects?

The IUD can make your periods heavier and cause cramping, especially in the first 3-6 months. Other rare complications associated with the IUD include irregular bleeding/spotting, perforating the uterus, or expulsion (IUD falls out).



How effective is the IUD?

The IUD is **99% effective** at preventing pregnancy. It does NOT offer any protection against sexually transmitted infections or HIV.

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