

What a Coil (IUD/IUS) Fitting or Exchange Involves

When you have had a chance to ask the doctor or nurse any questions you will be asked to sign a consent form to say that you understand what the insertion procedure involves and what risks there are.

THE FOLLOWING ARE IMPORTANT POINTS TO KNOW FOR FITTING OR EXCHANGE:

- ▶ It is a very good idea to take a painkiller such as Ibuprofen, ponstan (Also known as Feminax) or paracetamol prior to your appointment. This may help reduce any period type discomfort after the fitting
 - ▶ Many women are anxious to know whether the fitting procedure will be painful. It is hard to give a precise guide on this as women will vary in their response. It depends on various factors such as how sensitive their cervix is, how narrow or tight their cervical canal is through which the IUD/IUS passes and whether or not this will trigger any type of uterine (womb) 'period' type pain. Please inform the staff member if you are finding the procedure particularly uncomfortable
 - ▶ The majority of women (especially those who have had a vaginal delivery in the past) find the fitting procedure only mildly or moderately uncomfortable which normally only lasts for a brief period of time
- ▶ If local anaesthetic gel is being used this will be applied to the cervix via a small tube. This is applied to the surface and entrance of the cervix and is not painful
 - ▶ An instrument is gently placed on the cervix to keep it still. For many women they feel no discomfort whilst some women may experience it as a pinch or feel a momentary period type discomfort
 - ▶ If you are having a coil exchanged this is the point when the existing coil will be removed. The coil threads are held with a grasping instrument. Gentle, steady tension is applied and the existing coil usually comes out in one quick movement. Removal of a coil is regarded as a very straightforward procedure and usually very little discomfort is experienced
 - ▶ For a new coil being fitted we use a narrow measuring device (called a sound) to assess the length of the uterine cavity before inserting the IUD/IUS to the same depth. It is at this point that some women might experience lower pelvic discomfort or period type pain but for most it will only be mild or moderately troublesome for the brief time we are inserting the sound followed by the IUD/IUS
 - ▶ We trim the coil threads, remove the instrument holding the cervix, along with the speculum. We assist you with putting your legs down flat and let you rest for a few minutes afterwards.

THE PROCEDURE INVOLVES THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

- ▶ We will take your B/P before starting the procedure
- ▶ We ask you to lie on the examination couch (with your legs sometimes put in stirrups) and there will be an assistant there in the room to help the doctor/nurse fitter. The assistant is there to support you through the procedure too
- ▶ The doctor/nurse fitter will do a brief internal vaginal examination to check the direction of your uterus and then gently place a speculum to be able to see the cervix
- ▶ We give you some advice on coil use and when and how to check your coil threads. Sometimes we ask you to make a follow-up coil review appointment for between 6-8 weeks' time. This review appointment is at the discretion of the doctor/nurse fitting your IUD/IUS
- ▶ Most women feel fine and able to return to normal activities after the procedure. Some, however, will prefer to take it easy to allow any period type pelvic discomfort to settle down

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REGARDING ANY RISKS TO THE FITTING OR EXCHANGE PROCEDURE:

- ▶ Sometimes women feel faint or dizzy and/or hot and sweaty during or immediately after the procedure. This is commonly referred to as a vaso-vagal response and it is the body's temporary reaction to having a coil fitted. In this situation we would stop what we are doing, raise the foot end of the examination couch and give you oxygen via a face mask if we felt it was required. We check your B/P and pulse rate and in the rare event it's required, we have a drug to help bring up the blood pressure and heart rate. At most, if the coil had already been fitted, we may advise removal of the IUD/IUS to help your recovery. It is really rare for this reaction to occur and the majority of women who do experience this go on to recover quickly and do not require any active treatment
- ▶ There is an extremely small risk that the doctor/ nurse fitter perforates the cervix or uterus with the sound or IUD/IUS. The quoted risk of this happening is approximately 1-2 cases in every 1000 insertions. In the very rare event it occurred you may just need antibiotics and a review a week later.
These small perforations will normally be self-healing and do not cause any problems. However, if there is any suspicion of damage to the blood vessels in the wall of the uterus, bladder or bowel then we refer you to a gynaecologist the same day

- ▶ The reason we may ask to see you for a follow-up appointment is to ensure the IUD/IUS has not been expelled (fully or partially fallen out) and to check there is no sign of infection. The expulsion rate is usually quoted as being 1 in 20 insertions and there are no quoted rates for infection risk after having an IUD/IUS

Specialists in Reproductive Health and Contraception feel intrauterine devices (IUD) and intrauterine systems (IUS) are excellent forms of contraception as they fall under the category of Long Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC)

They have very low contraception failure rates; are easily reversible methods of contraception and have no lasting effect on a woman's fertility once removed.

A coil can be used for contraception for as long as a woman requires it.

There are no maximum number of coils a woman can use in her lifetime.

A coil may be used for contraception until menopause has been confirmed or up to the age of 55 years when there is no pregnancy risk and it is safe to have it removed.

If you have concerns after your coil fit or exchange we would be happy to see you. Please call the **Essex Sexual Health Service Intelligence Centre** central booking number on 📞 **0300 003 1212** to book a coil review appointment.

Please refer to the Essex Sexual Health Service website for further information including clinic locations and opening times: **www.essexsexualhealthservice.org.uk**