

Coil fitting information sheet

There are four types of Intra-Uterine Contraceptive Devices (IUCDs or 'coils') fitted in this service.

- The Mirena intra-uterine system (IUS) or hormone coil
- The Jaydess (IUS) hormone coil
- The Copper T Safe (IUD) non-hormone coil
- The Nova T (IUD) non-hormone coil

All coils are licensed for contraception. Their contraceptive effect slightly varies between type. The hormone coils keep the lining of your womb thin, stopping implantation, thicken your cervical mucus (preventing entrance of sperm), and in some cases prevent ovulation. The copper coils act as a spermicide and also prevent implantation of any fertilised egg by causing the womb to be hostile.

The Mirena

The Mirena is a hormone coil which uses levonorgestrel (a type of progestogen). This is slowly released into the lining of your womb. This causes your mucus to thicken and for some women, stops ovulation. It also makes the lining thin and stops implantation. This also has the added benefit of generally making bleeds much lighter and in most cases, stopping them altogether. This means that as well as contraception, it is also used to manage heavy bleeding, even in women with endometriosis. It can also be used as womb protection for HRT and is accepted practice to be used for 5 years for all of these indications.

The amount of progesterone that you will have in your body is equal to that of 2 progesterone pills per week.

The Jaydess

This is also a hormonal coil. It also uses levonorgestrel, but it is a smaller device and uses a lower dose. This means that it is only licensed for contraception and only for 3 years.

The Copper Coils

The copper coils do not contain any hormones. They may make your bleeding heavier or more painful, especially if coming off of hormonal contraception and so are not always suitable for people with heavy, painful bleeds already. As there are no hormones, you should experience your usual cycle. This can be a little erratic in the first few months after fitting, but does settle down.

The copper T safe is licensed for 10 years and the Nova T380 for 5 years as contraceptives. The copper acts as a spermicide and the effects on the womb prevent implantation of an already fertilised egg. Due to this it can also be fitted as emergency contraception up to 5 days after unprotected sexual intercourse.



Before the Coil is fitted

You must not be pregnant at the time of fitting. Ideally this means no unprotected sexual intercourse from the first day of your last period until it is fitted. If you are currently using a different form of contraception then this could be continued for up to 7 days after fitting. The clinician will also discuss any likelihood of STI with you prior to fitting and may take swabs at the time of the procedure if indicated.

To book an appointment

Your practice will add you to our waiting list. Once added to the waiting list, one of the clinical team will contact you within 7 days. The clinician will talk through the various options available to you and prescribe the device agreed for your fitting appointment. They will then book you into the next available appointment slot. The service is being run from Amwell Surgery (Fawkon Walk, Hoddesdon EN11 8FG) and usually on a Saturday morning.

When can a coil be fitted?

A coil can be fitted at any time during your menstrual cycle. If it is over 7 days since the start of your last period there needs to be certainty that you are not pregnant. The copper coil can be used for emergency contraception up to 5 days after unprotected sex. When having a hormonal coil fitted, it is important to remember that it takes 7 days to be fully effective and so alternative contraception should be used for 7 days post fitting.

Who can have a coil?

There are only a few reasons that mean that the coil is not an option. These will be discussed with you when the clinician calls to counsel you before the appointment. If you have never given birth, it is still possible to fit a coil, though it may be a little more uncomfortable as the cervix (neck of the womb) has not been stretched before. There are slimmer line coils available, which may be more suitable, depending on the reasons you are having a coil fitted.

What are the benefits?

All types of LARC (Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives) are 'fit and forget'. This means that once it is fitted, you do not have to worry about contraception every time you have intercourse. You do not have to remember to take the pill either, which some women do struggle with.

They are very effective contraceptive options because of this and are over 99% effective. Due to there being no hormones in the copper coil and a low dose of hormones in the hormone coils, they are also less likely to give systemic side effects, though these can still happen with the hormone coils.

What are the risks?

There is a small risk of infection after a fitting of a coil. This can be recognised by a change in discharge – more odour or change in colour; pain in excess of what was expected or a temperature. If you have these symptoms, you can book in for an appointment with your usual practice for a check and swabs.



There is also a possibility that your body could expel the coil, this may happen with a particularly heavy bleed. This could happen at any time, but is more likely in the first 3 months after having it fitted. This is why we will advise that you check for your threads regularly whilst you have a coil in place.

There is a very small risk (less than 2 in 1000) that during the procedure a small hole is made in the wall of your cervix. This is more likely if you have recently given birth or are breastfeeding. This could happen when measuring or when the coil is fitted. It may be recognised before the coil is fitted in which case the procedure will be stopped and re arranged for 6 weeks' time at which point it will have healed by itself. If it happens and is not recognised before the coil is fitted, there is a small possibility that the coil could travel through the hole and into your abdomen. This would require a small operation to remove it.

All of these possibilities are why it is advised that you book a coil check in with your usual practice nurse 4-6 weeks after having the coil fitted and at any time that you can no longer feel your threads.

There is also a small risk of feeling faint and dizzy when having the coil fitted due to the stimulation of the cervical nerves. This is called cervical shock. This usually settles spontaneously when the cervix is no longer being touched and there will be medication given if necessary.

Your bleeding pattern may change with either coil type. This can take between 3-6 months to settle down. Hormonal effects can also happen with progesterone coils such as mood and skin changes.

Coil contraceptives are extremely effective, but there is a small failure rate. Should you fall pregnant with the coil in place there is an increased possibility that this will be an ectopic pregnancy. If you experience any one-sided abdominal pain with the coil in situ, you should take a pregnancy test and seek medical advice.

Coil changing

If your coil is due to be changed, please make an appointment, but owing to the theoretical risk of pregnancy if a new coil cannot be fitted, please make sure you have not had any unprotected sexual intercourse for the seven days prior to fitting.

On the day of the procedure

The fitting takes a total of approximately 10-15 minutes. You are advised to take 400mg of ibuprofen (if tolerated) approximately 2 hours before the procedure. You will be asked to sign a consent form for the procedure. It is possible that the procedure will cause a bleed and so you can bring a sanitary towel or one will be provided.



What happens if I do not get on with my coil?

If you do not get on with the device then it can be removed in a short appointment with your usual surgery. It is worth persevering as most side effects will settle after the first six months.

Where else can I get information about LARC procedures?

Some useful websites to access when seeking more information about Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives can be found at:

<https://patient.info/sexual-health/long-acting-reversible-contraceptives-larc>

<https://www.sexwise.org.uk/contraception>